Selection of materials assembled for the planned Pinball Issue of *The Situationist Times*, including original photographs by Hans Brinkman, previously unpublished essays by Brinkman and the psychologist Joost Mathijsen, an inventory of pinball machines in Amsterdam, books and flyers, clippings from magazines and newspapers, as well as correspondence with prospective collaborators.

hans brinkman

Singel 155 Amsterdam 6-3-'75

Dear Sirs,
We are preparing an issue of our magazine "The Situationist Times" (no.7) on Pinball machines, that is to say anything on its history and any poo ible images of all pinballs ever made.
Actually anything on the subject is of great use to us.
Our magazine is a semi non commercial art (avant guard) one.
It had for example an issue on Labyrinth, one on chains and rings one on interlaced patterns etz.
The Pinball issue will have a plan of Amsterdam city with all cafés etz. with pinballs, and then of which mark they are, which type when a free game, the bonusses tz.
Now we have two questions: Could you please give us any information on the history of pinball which you have.
And could you please send us folders, catalogues, any publications that exsist on pinball machines, also old ones if you still might have them.
We ourselves have a Gottlieb "Gaucho" at home, and are very pleased with it.

Hoping to hear soon from and receive any information which you can give us, sincerely yours

Hans Brinkman Jacqueline de Jong

Hans Brinkman Jacqueline de Jong

Questionary for the situationist Times no.7
on the subject of the PINBALL OR FLIPPER/ machine.

1. How did the flipper come into being
2. What is it's origine
3. Whic company and or person started it firstly
4. Which country and when
5. Are there any images of the first machines
6. When did it come into being ceeq. e.
7. Which are the countries here the flipper is played
8. In which counties are the prohibited and why
9. In how many languages are flippers produced
10. Are the e special expressions and in which language for flippers and the people that play them
11. Special expressions for during the play
12. Are there special books or magazines on flippers
13. Any flipper clubs, parties, olympics, records etc.
14. What i the reason that in different countries different amount of balls are in a game (for ex. in France 5 balls in Holland and Italy 3 balls etc.)
15. Why is there fo instance no free game permitted in Italy, and where else is it that way.
16. Do you know of any artists that have used flippers in their work (like the WHO in Tommy with "Pinball Wizard" and Segal 's sculpture of a man and a flipper, who
17. How does a flipper get into being
18. Are there any laws about age of permission to play a machine, are there any other rules and laws in different countries on flippers
19. Are there any films, paintings, books, music etc on flippers
20. How does one become a flippermechanic
21. Which games are the origine of the flipperconstruction
22. Are there any tapes or records of the sound of flippers
23. Has the sound been used in music

fixed on the hammer for [illegible]

flint'y *a.* made of, or resembling, flint; (*Fig.*) hard-hearted; cruel [O.E. *flint*].

flip (flip) *n.* a hot drink composed of beer and spirits sweetened; a drink of hot milk, eggs, sugar and spirits [prob. fr. verb *flip*].

flip (flip) *v.t.* to flick; to toss by striking fingertip with thumb; to fillip; to jerk.—*pr.p.* **flip'ping**.—*pa.p.* **flipped**.—*n.* a flick; a snap; (*Colloq.*) a short trip, or pleasure flight, in an aeroplane.—**flip'per** *n.* the limb of an animal which facilitates swimming; (*Slang*) the human hand [var. of *flap*].

flippant (flip'ant) *a.* pert; voluble; lacking seriousness; shallow.—**flipp'ancy** *n.* undue levity; frivolousness; pertness.—**flipp'antly** [illegible] doubtful].

HANS BRINKMAN, 1973

PLAYING PINBALL IS DELIGHTFULLLLLLLLLL!

Him: with his legs spread a little, pivoting and thrusting his hips, generally pushing gently or hard with the palms of both his hands, turning away from the cabinet satisfied or cursing.

Her: with her knees together (as if she needs to go to the toilet); otherwise making the same movements as him (except less freely).

This is the most common pose for boys and girls (or men and women) playing pinball.

The pinball machine, a small rectangular cabinet (dimensions: 60 × 150 × 60 cm) painted brightly on all sides; the top is covered with a glass pane through which it is possible to look into the cabinet.

The cabinet stands on four legs, of which the front ones are slightly lower, so that you automatically look into the machine, where you see bumpers, little lights, numbers, rubber bands, rotating discs—in short, a fair-like spectacle.

At the back of the cabinet there is another rectangular cabinet with, at the front, a brightly coloured plate with the name of the cabinet, 1, 2, 3 or 4 counters, a small counter for free games, the whole combined with a drawing related to the name (for example: GAUCHO with a cowboy wielding a whip or SUPER STAR with playing and singing pop artists on it).

The pinball machine comes from a kind of billiard table with holes and a particular score counter; this form of billiards was played in America in 1860 already. Around 1900 a certain D. Gottlieb began to pore over this game and modernized it, and so in 1930 the Baffle Ball emerged, a small field where the ball got kicked and on the way down ended up in holes or little compartments with again a particular score counter.

In 1932 Mister Steve Kordek fled Poland for America and ended up with D. Gottlieb.

There he began designing pinball machines and contributed to the first electric pinball machine, which came out in about 1933. That is how Pay Day was born.

The latest gadgets followed one another. Today too new models with different possibilities are launched on the market: for instance, fully electronic models.

But it is only in 1947 that the first pinball machine came out (as today) with the score counter, bumpers, rubbers, and the electrically powered tilt system, with the two flippers to be activated by a button by which you could influence the game yourself.

What possesses man in fact to play on such a cabinet, to slam it, to hit it, to curse??

A friend of mine, the psychologist Dr. Joost Mathijsen has written an essay: "Once my attention had been drawn by my companions to the erotic roots of the game of pinball, it strikes me a lot more that the typical *passionate pinball player is a young man*, who systematically launches projectiles from hip level by pulling on a mushroom-shaped knob, after which he accompanies the trajectory of his ejaculate with coitus-like body movements." (plus touches the pinball buttons with his middle finger. h.b.)

He thereby advances the postulate that 80% of pinball players are male people aged between 10 and 30. The 20% comprise children, the elderly and female pinball players (in the literary café "de Engelbewaarder" and in the SPIEGELTENT on the Museumplein a pinball contest (certainly *not* the *first* world championships) was played with about 150 men and 8 women).

You can subdivide the pinball people into a number of categories, among others people who play out of boredom, out of gambling fever, competitiveness, out of conviviality, and the technical and scientific players. The first is unimportant (although not for the catering industry; is business quiet??? then play a game of pinball!!).

In the Netherlands gambling fever is not yet as widespread as in other countries. In Paris, for instance, in some businesses, people literally play with a knife on the table, with money underneath it naturally. I myself prefer to choose a combination of the last categories, although they are each worth taking a closer look at.

In the Netherlands for a quarter you will get 1 game with 5 balls (sometimes 3 in 8-2 businesses). In Paris (the pinball cradle of Europe) for 50 centimes you will get 1 game with 3 balls, while in Italy for 50 lire you will get 1 game with 3 balls but it is forbidden to get a free game; you can only obtain a free ball in some places; this has been imposed by the government to combat gambling, as a result of which there is a lot of gambling precisely for the highest score. The pop group The Who has written a pop opera, *Tommy*, which is about Tommy the pinball wizard. By playing the pinball machine and trying to defeat it, he feels himself become bigger and more powerful. You play not only against fellow players, but also against the mechanism. Humanity's fear of being dominated by computers in the future is here being played out on a small scale, so that playing itself is also a competition.

You come across the technical and scientific players mostly in the pinball arcades, which are organized coolly, efficiently and professionally. But you miss the conviviality (playing a quick round) and the contact with your fellow players. In a couple of cafés where I play, you can also win prizes: 1 bottle of whisky for the highest score of the month. This encourages playing and hanging around of course too.

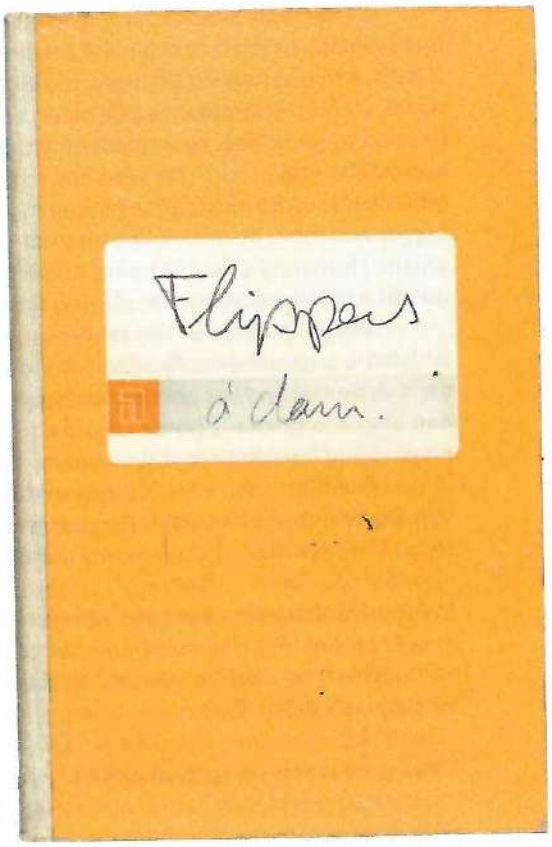
There are also a lot of people who have a pinball machine at home, among others Elly Van Stekelenburg (actress), Roland Sweering (photographer), Jacqueline de Jong (painter), Hugo Claus (writer), Joka Berretty (actress), Ton Lensink (actor), Bob Alberts (film-maker).

In America there was a person who was so crazy about pinball that he had a pinball machine in every room and also taught pinball to the children in the neighbourhood.

When he died he was buried in a pinball machine (which had been made somewhat longer) called Gay Go's.

Playing Pinball is delightfulllllllllllll!

(Translated from the Dutch by Patrick Lennon.)



1. Al pinto.
Zoutsteeg 1
merk: Fan-tas-tic.
Kwaliteit: redelijk. tamelijk
prijs spel: 60000
Bijzonder Leden:
Tilt: redelijk

---

2. De Engelbewaarder.
Kloosterlaan Bergwal.
merk: Fiber ball.
Kwaliteit: goed tot zeergoed. (Tilt: goed)
prijs spel: 45000.
Bijz. Leden: Recht-boven voor het gat van een extra speed bal, dit een pin die er eigenlijk niet hoort. Het is gedaan omdat je anders kon-stand de bal er in schiet.

9. Café . amstel stroom.
stroomarkt. 1.

merk: Rock makers.
kwaliteit: middlmating
uitspel: 4000.
tilt: goed.
bij zonder heden: bumbers lui
banden zeer goed.
denk aan de extra flipper
links boven.

lotelij. goed.

10. Café de kroon.
aande brug steeg 25

merk: acer & kings
kwaliteit: oud, lui.
uitspel: 4000.
tilt: goed.
loterij: goed.
bij zonder heden: de laagst
staande geel een zondje.
De hoogst staande van de
maand krijgt f 10.-.

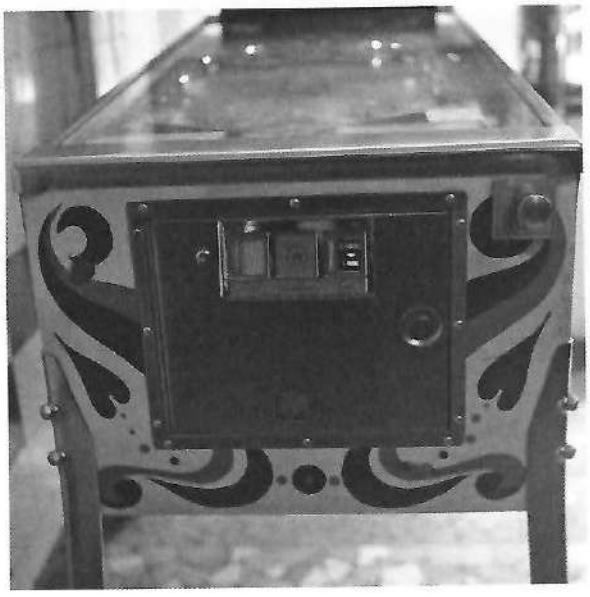
middelste rotatie werkt niet
goed.

De "kunten" bovenaan moeten
hard door de bal aangeraakt
worden.

37. Cafetaria het Baertje.
nieuwe nieuwstr. 20
merk: Jack Pot.
kwaliteit: goed
tilt: redelijk
loterij: goed
uitspel: 72.000 of 3x een
bij zonder h: je kan
de bal niet van
zonder met de flipper
tegen de band.
de 2 g.n. elleboog groep
bumpers lui.

38. Café L'esperance"
nieuwedijk 15g
merk: space time
kwaliteit: goed spel lekker
Tilt: slecht
loterij: goed
uitspel: ± 8.000
bij zonder h. 2 g.n.
Collect tunnel als je
tegen een kontakt schiet
kunje het aantal punten
van de tunnel 1000 tot 5000
de 3 ballen

SAME PLAYER

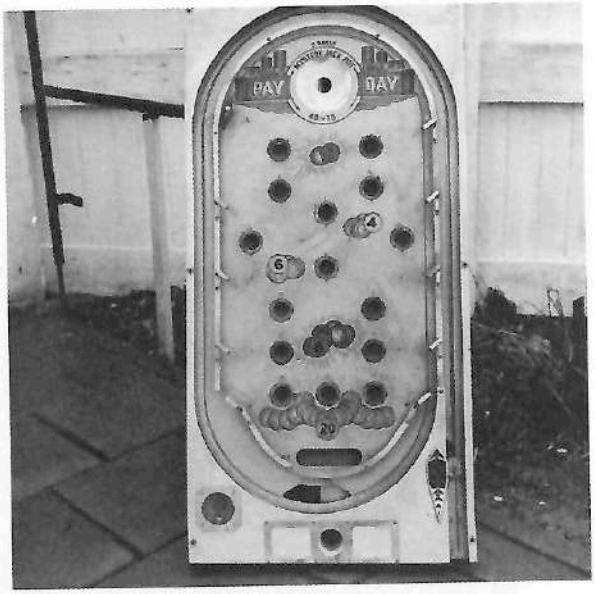


1
2
1-PLAYER
2-PLAYER
CAN PLAY
3
4
IT'S MORE FUN TO COMPETE!
3-PLAYER
4-PLAYER
4 PLAYER
MERRY WIDOW

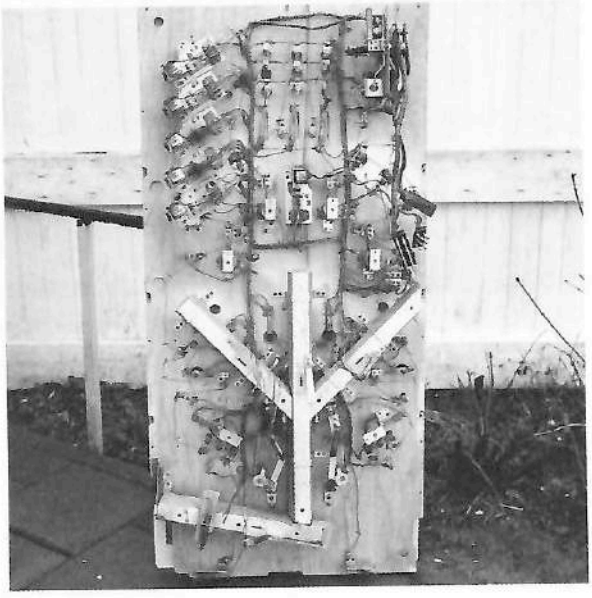
4 PLAYER
MERRY WIDOW

THEATRVM
PIRATICVM

CLOWN


PAY
DAY

PAY
DAY



TOP HAND

SUPER
DUO
1ST PLAYER
16068

SCORE
SPACE ORBIT

TEXAS
RANGER

SILENCE
VARIETY

1 PLAYER
2 PLAYER
3 PLAYER
4 PLAYER
GAUCHO
Ball in Play

LIBERTY BELLE

Brandneu ist ein ausgefranster Jeansjupe. Dieses Modell ist von Gassmann in Zürich und kostet Fr. 149.— Das Bain-de-soleil-Oberteil ist aus violettem Jersey mit Satinstickerei. Es kostet Fr. 79.— und ist von Au Grenier in Zürich. Der breite, drapierte Goldledergürtel kostet Fr. 178.— und ist ebenfalls von Au Grenier in Zürich. Die bis ans Knie reichenden Jeansstiefel kosten Fr. 128.— und sind bei Blondino in Zürich erhältlich.

Im Flippersalon photographiert
Jeans für Ausgeflippte

elegraaf

GROOTSTE KRANT VAN NEDERLAND

Hoofdredactie: C. J. Brandt - H. Goeman Borgesius

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64 pagina's

zaterdag 18 augustus 1973

er warm

Zaterdag: zon onder 19.58; zondag: op 5.36
Zondag: zon onder 19.56; maandag: op 5.37

Vandaag in De Telegraaf

Olie maakt Arabieren tot financiële supermacht

Graag mogen de zeer gefortuneerde oliesjeiks bij tijd en wijle de meedogenloze hitte en het vaak streng religieuze leefklimaat van hun eigen gebied ontvluchten. Met name in de koele berglucht in de omgeving van Beiroet kunnen zij in allerhande opzichten ruimer ademhalen. Hier vernozen de telgen van een der invloedrijkste families van Qatar zich op een manier, die in hun eigen land, gezien de daar gehanteerde godsdienstige wetten volstrekt ondenkbaar zou zijn. Pagina 17

Vredeling zwicht voor overwerk-eisen van VVDM

onze parlementaire redactie

de vereniging besloten af te zien van haar aanvankelijke voornemen om vandaag militairen in uniforme voor het [illegible] van Defensie te

Gekrenkte Britten zien machteloos toe op . . .

Koopjesrace naar Engeland . . .

pagina 5

Frankrijk zorgt slecht voor zijn bejaarden

pagina [illegible]

MA: ver … oon

… er Kees van der Wild

DEN HAAG, zaterdag

Hoe hoger het inko… en, hoe minder kinder… slag.

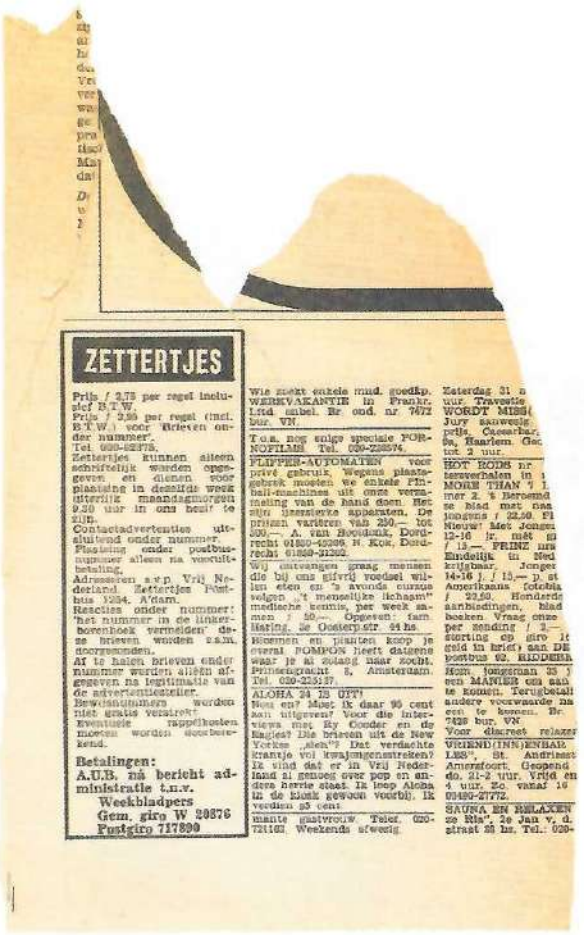
Dat is de kern van een …orstel, dat door de hoog… beleidsadviseurs van minister drs. J. Boersma (Sociale Zaken) wordt uitgewerkt.

Het is de bedoeling van het kabinet-Den Uyl deze zaak eerst nog voor te leggen aan de Sociaal-Economische Raad. De achtergrond is het stokpaardje van minister Boersma: het tot stand brengen van een inkomenspolitiek.

In de adviesaanvrage van de SER zal worden gesuggereerd de kinderbijslaguitkering te verminderen naarmate het inkomen stijgt. Het voorstel is nog niet volledig uitgewerkt aan het kabinet ter beoordeling voorgelegd, maar de gedachten gaan in eerste instantie uit naar een inkomen van ƒ 24.300,- per jaar als grens. Daarboven wordt het uitgekeerde bedrag aan kinderbijslag steeds kleiner.

…nder tafel

… van kinderbijslag. … vorige kabi… …f — onder … verzet van … er tafel



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Wie stookt enkele mnd. goedkp. WERKVAKANTIE in Frankr. Ltdd onbel. Br ond. nr 7472 bur. VN.

Tn.a. nog enige speciale PORNOFILMS! Tel. 020-228574.

FLIPPER-AUTOMATEN voor privé gebruik. Wegens plaatsgebrek moeten we enkele Pinball-machines uit onze verhuring van de hand doen. Heel mjen leerzame apparaten. De prijzen variëren van 250,— tot 500,—. A. van Houdenik, Dordrecht 01850-42005 H. Kok, Dordrecht 01850-31202.

Wij ontvangen graag mensen die bij ons gitvrij voedsel willen eten en 's avonds cursus volgen „'t menselijke lichaam" medische kennis, per week samen / 50,—. Opgeven: familieling, de Oosterpoort 64 hs.

Bloemen en planten koop je overal. BOMPON heeft datgene waar je al zolang naar zoekt. Prinsengracht 8, Amsterdam. Tel. 020-225137.

ALOHA 24 IS UIT!
Nou en? Moet ik daar 90 cent aan uitgeven? Voor die interviews met Ry Cooder en de Stones? Die brieven uit de New Yorkse „elen"? Dat verdachte krantje vol kwajongenstreken? Ik vind dat er in Vrij Nederland al genoeg over pop en andere herrie staat. Ik loop Aloha in de kiosk gewoon voorbij. Ik verdien 25 cent.

mante gastvrouw. Telef. 020-721103. Weekends afwezig.

Zaterdag 31 a uur. Travestie WORDT MISS(Jury aanwezig perls, Caserbar, 9a, Haarlem. Ge tot 2 uur.

HOT RODS nr tenwerbalen in MORE THAN 7 mer 2. 's Berooml se blad met nas jongens / 22,50. Fl Nieuw! Met Jonge 12-16 jr. mét fi / 13,— PRINZ nra Eindelijk in Ned krijgbaar. Jonge 14-16 j. / 15,— p. st Amerikaans foto-bla / 22,50. Honderds aanbiedingen, blad boeken. Vraag onze per zending / 2,— storting op giro 1 geld in brief) aan DE postbus 62, RIDDERK Hem. jongman 25 j ren MANIER om aan te komen. Terugbetali andere voorwaarde na een te komen. Br. 7428 bur. VN. Voor discreet relaxe

VRIEND(INN)ENBAR LES", St. Antoniesst Amersfoort. Geopend do. 21-2 uur. Vrijd en 4 uur. Zo. vanaf 16 03492-27772.

SAUNA EN RELAXEN ze Ria", 2e Jan v. d. straat 28 hs. Tel.: 020-

Zowel uit als thuis worden de natuurlijke rondingen sterker geaccentueerd. Erg geschikt is daarvoor een Italiaanse herenborstrok (boven).

Christiaan de Greuve, drager van de gouden erepenning der maatschappij en kostschoolhouder te Amsterdam.

Tegen deze achtergrond kan het boek van Betty Gleim, dat verscheen in 1815 en overigens ook een verschrikking was, worden gezien als een historische mijlpaal. O nee, zelfs Betty waagde het niet ook maar zijdelings met

Photos J.-P. Rey

DE DOS ET DE FACE, LES « FLIPPERMEN » D'UNE KERMESSE DE MONTMARTRE
« Tout ce qu'ils demandent, c'est de se vider l'esprit dans la machine »

SOCIETE

Les obsédés du «tilt»

Pour les mordus du billard électrique, les millions sont fictifs : on ne gagne que le droit de recommencer

« Qu'est-ce qu'un *flipper* pour vous ?
— *Un contact.*
— Quelque chose de vivant ?
— *Une personne, bien sûr.*
— Quelqu'un de proche ?
— *Un frère. Un vieux copain.*
— Une femme ?

sent l'amour du *flipper* au point de vouloir le posséder. Ils achètent entre 600 F et 1 500 F de vieux appareils qu'ils installent chez eux. L'un d'eux : « *Un* flipper *spécialement pour y mettre des fleurs.* » Ou bien : « *C'est une lumière acide avant tout. Une lampe de chevet. Je ne m'éclaire qu'au* flipper. » « *Nous, on est des Char-*

Thuis flipperen

UTRECHT — Een privé-flipperkast wenst zich menige vermoede speler. De tweede-handskasten zijn erg zeldzaam. Ze brengen hoge bedragen op.

Sinds kort worden er Japanse flipperkasten in Nederland ingevoerd. Ze hebben al dichtbij gestaan in de zogeheten Pachinko-speelsalons.

International Design in Alkmaar voorziet winkels in luxe huishoudelijke artikelen en modieuze woninginrichtingsmaken van deze kasten.

Thuis kan de jack-pot gewonnen worden. Elke kast heeft vierhonderd kogeltjes, waar allerlei tekens op staan. De tekens vertellen de winnaar hoe hoog de prijs is.

Een tweede-hands-Nuhjin-flipperkast kost f 400

ZATERDAGS BIJVOEGSEL NRC HANDELSBLAD 14/10/1972

Eerste hoorspel EO

„Toe nou Dolf..."

„Nee Jozien, wie gaan wil moet je niet tegenhouden. Maar dit wil ik je nog zeggen jongen: als er één is die je altijd de hand boven het hoofd heeft gehouden, is dat je moeder. En haar doe je dit nu aan. Het is fraai!"

Dolf verlaat het huis om op een kamer te gaan wonen waar zijn meisje van andersdenkenden huize in de weekenden voor hem zal koken. Als hij met een bakfiets zijn spullen komt halen, wil moeder hem nog iets zeggen over „de weg die wij te bewandelen hebben, de enige weg. De keus die we hebben te maken", maar daar krijgt ze de kans niet voor want Dolfs a.s. zwager komt mee. Stommel stommel de trap op: „Er valt heel wat voor je te sjouwen kerel."

Moeder deelt Dolfs zuster, Lien, aan de vooravond van haar Belijdenis mede dat vader veel aan Dolf denkt, „soms in vertrouwen, soms met angst in zijn hart". Gelukkig ontmoet vader op de kerkeraadsvergadering broeder Spanjaard die hem de ogen opent. „Kort en goed", zegt vader tot moeder, „op weg naar huis moest ik denken aan de gelijkenis van de verloren zoon, maar dan in omgekeerde zin. Ik zal opstaan en tot mijn kinderen gaan."

Gelukkig treft het zo dat het meisje van andersdenkenden huize bij de buren boter aan het lenen is en de zoon die dag geslaagd voor zijn kandidaats als vader om vergeving komt vragen voor het niet accepteren van de a.s. schoondochter. Alles komt dus goed. „Wie zoekt, die vindt. Wie klopt, die wordt opengedaan." „Moeders stem die tot nu toe zo zorgelijk klonk, krijgt een jubeltoon die alleen professionele acteurs opbrengen. Vreemd, want de Evangelische Omroep werkt alleen met mensen die achter de beginselen staan en dat geeft haar uitzendingen nu juist dat speciale cachet waarvan menig beroepscabaretier zich de vingers aflikt.

Zo'n hoorspelkernstem ertussen valt onmiddellijk op. Omdat de gids geen rolverdeling vermeldde bij het eerste hoorspel van de E.O. eveq de nieuwe omroep [illegible] met die professionele stem van moeder. Inderdaad, het was Nel Snel. Zij was de enige van de hoorspelkern die bereid bleek E.O.'s „erfgoed der vaderen" voor de microfoon uit te dragen. E.O.'s woordvoerder deelde nog mee dat de omroep zoekende is naar meer acteurs die achter de beginselen staan want er is een serie-hoorspel op komst van twintig afleveringen en het is f 7.50 en er zijn driehonderd rugnummers voorradig.

Het literair geflipper begint met een speciaal flippernummer van Propria Cures, dat deze week verschijnt. Hugo Claus heeft thuis twee flipperautomaten en de ook al niet tot de heffe des volks behorende bezoekers van het Mickery-theater flipperen zich tussen de toneelvoorstellingen een ongeluk. Mijn indruk dat de flipperkast zich van de snackbar verplaatst heeft naar andersoortige vermaakcentra, wordt bevestigd door een van de Amsterdamse amusementsapparatenverhuurders, W. Verhage: „In culturele cafés wordt behoorlijk gespeeld."

„Culturele cafés" is zijn definitie voor de zaken waar een jong publiek komt dat verder geleerd heeft of daar nog mee bezig is. „Je komt er toch niet achter waarom de mensen opeens zoiets leuk vinden. Als je een café van de buitenkant ziet, is het absoluut niet te bepalen of ie goed zal gaan of niet. Je kan het altijd proberen." De apparaten worden geplaatst op fifty-fifty basis: de helft van het geld dat er uit komt krijgt de verhuurder, de andere helft het café. De zaken die het eerst

flipper-automaten hadden, zijn al lang overgeschakeld op de zogenaamde fruit-machines [illegible] waar bij meer gok in het spel zit.

De anderhalve echte vethuif die nog in Nederland rondloopt, zul je dus niet achter de flipperkast aantreffen. Fotograaf Fons Mandere is ze aan het opsporen in Drenthe (TT-races Assen!) en de Zaanstreek, zodat de flipperaars van het literair café straks in Avenue kunnen zien hoe zij hun haar moeten kammen. Cultuuroverdracht heet

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vol. 19, no. 12—decembe

PLAYBOY

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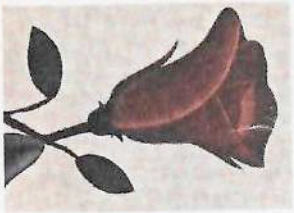

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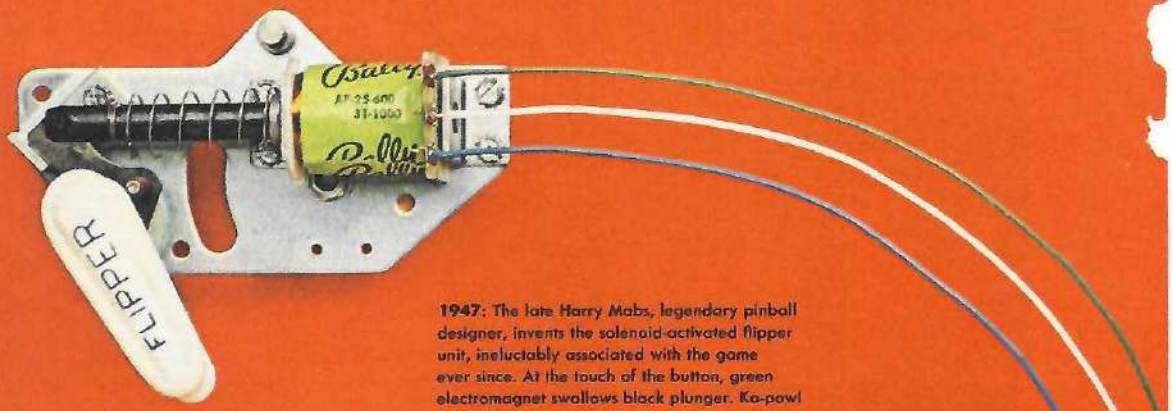
GREAT MOMENTS IN PINBALL HISTORY



1947: The late Harry Mabs, legendary pinball designer, invents the solenoid-activated flipper unit, ineluctably associated with the game ever since. At the touch of the button, green electromagnet swallows black plunger. Ka-pow!

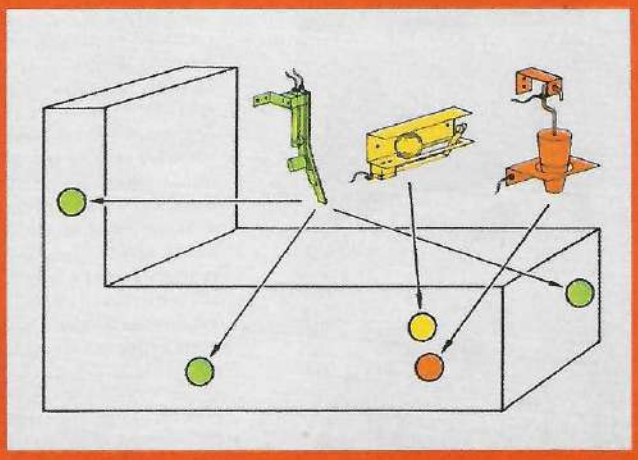
. . . concerning the finest game on four legs—and how you can purchase one for your very own

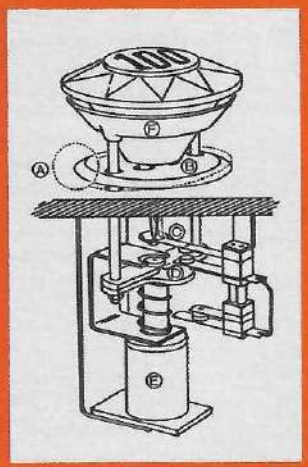
modern living

By MICHAEL LAURENCE

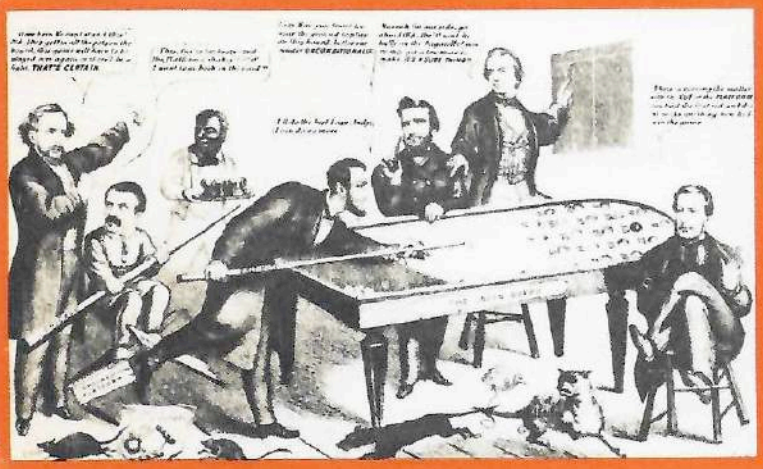
DESPITE ALL THE BLATHER about airplanes and racing cars, the ultimate commingling of man and machine still takes place at the silk-smooth flipper buttons of a well-tuned pinball machine. No other human endeavor so involves skills of mind and body with the challenging intricacies of a mechanical toy. Nowhere else are the rewards as rich, the sorrows as devastating. Except for its ability to preoccupy for hours or even days at a time, pinball playing could be compared to making love. Both acts are sources of a pleasure better experienced than described. Both improve with practice and respond to innovation. And both can prove satisfying day after day for an entire lifetime, as refinements in technique supplant flagging desire and increasing familiarity.

Not surprising, when you think about it. While not as old as lovemaking itself, pinball far preceded airplanes, automobiles or other mechanical gadgets through which men express themselves. The contemporary pinball machine had its ancestor in the bagatelle board, a billiardlike gaming device whose origins are lost in antiquity. The first literary reference to pinball—in chapter 14 of *Pickwick Papers*—mentions one of these: Members of the Pickwick Club visited the *(continued on page 260)*

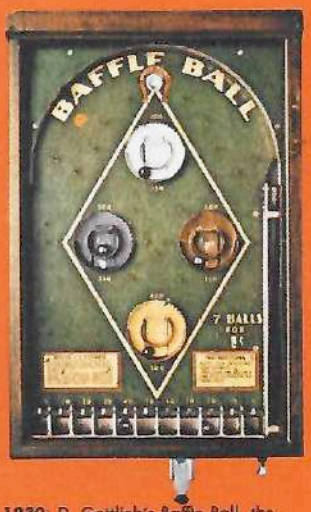




1935: A banner year for pinball innovation. Electronic anti-tilt devices eliminate brawn as a play factor; solenoid-powered kicker units add action. Sketch of contemporary machine (above) shows design and placement of anti-tilt devices. Plumb bob (in red) is positioned near left flipper button; machine tilts when plumb hits metal ring. Moral: Nudge the machine with your right hand. Ball-in-channel device (yellow), also located at left, tilts if machine is raised. No putting bricks under the front legs. Anti-slam devices (green) protect against hard knocks. Left: The modern thumper-bumper unit is a model of electronic simplicity. Ball Ⓐ hits ring Ⓑ connected to pylon Ⓒ closing contacts Ⓓ activating solenoid Ⓔ, which pulls down ring Ⓕ. Ka-chunk!

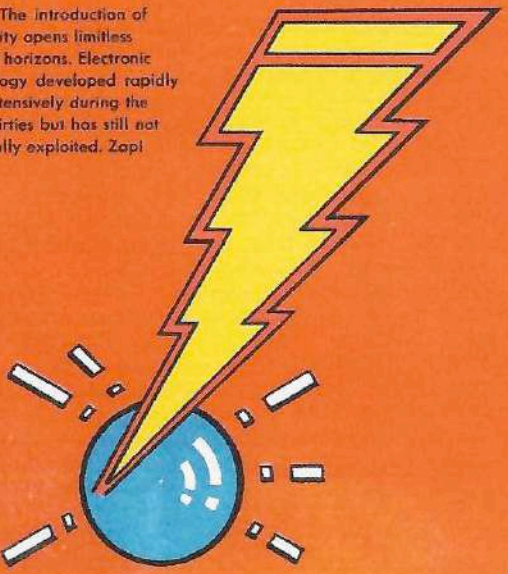


1862: Union Army suffers staggering defeat at Bull Run, while President Lincoln plays pinball. Rodents at lower left—and players' scruffy beards—typify the sleaziness with which pinballing was once associated. But no more. Football is now the sport of Presidents, but Beautiful People still prefer pinball. Ka-ching!



1930: D. Gottlieb's Baffle Ball, the first mass-marketed pinball machine, paid the rent for a generation of Depression-era barkeeps. Plink, plink.

1933: The introduction of electricity opens limitless pinball horizons. Electronic technology developed rapidly and extensively during the late Thirties but has still not been fully exploited. Zap!



1973: Tomorrow's pinball? Sea Hunt, by Allied Leisure Industries, gives illusion of underwater play. Motorcycle grips activate flippers and shake mirrored playfield. Glug, glug.

1937: A year writ larger than life on the mnemonic backboard of a generation of pinballers. On December fourth, Western Equipment and Supply Company, now defunct, introduces Aksarben (that's Nebraska spelled backward)—featuring the addictive allure of free games. To the subjective rewards of five well-played balls, add positive reinforcement and delayed gratification. Thwack, thwack!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN CRAIG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON AZUMA

Amsterdam-17-I '73

Dear Michael Laurence,
With great pleasure we read your article on Pinball machines.
As we are ourselves preparing a complete issue on Pinball, we would very much like to ask you, if you would be willing to give us any further information and if you could collaborate to this issue, in any way possible.
One of our main problems is to find out all we can on the History of the Pinball, and all that is connected to it.
The magazine we edit is a small avantgaard thing, consisting of all possible facts images articles etc. on the choosen subject. It is called The Situationist Times. The subjects were for example Labyrinth, (200 pages and 400 images), Chains and rings, Interlaced patterns. In New York it was always sold at Wittenborns, so perhaps you can have a look there.
The Pinball issue will be as international as possible, mainly in English, consisting of all facts we can get from all countries on Pinball, that is to say where they are prohibited or simply non-existing, how many balls, free games etc are to be found and where. The entire tradition in those countries concerning pinball.
We are going to publish articles by mathematicians, sociologues, psychologues, writers, musicians, reproductions of paintings about pinball, interviews with flipperfreaks, and anti-machine-people.
Mechanicians, we need to tell us their experiences.
Then we also are making a map of the centre of Amsterdam with all the pinball machines pointed out on it, how they are, how many games, hours one can play and so on; this map will be sent out and can be put on the wall, for daily use.
We would be very happy if you will-
to collaborate with us, and hope that you write back very soon what your suggestions are.

Hoping to receive soon an answer,
very sincerely yours

Hans Brinkman and Jac Leeflang de Jong

Amsterdam

PLAYBOY

February 1, 1973

Mr. Hans Brinkman
Singel 155
Amsterdam, Holland

Dear Mr. Brinkman:

Michael Laurence has asked me to write and thank you for your kind letter of January 17.

It is unfortunate, however, that Mr. Laurence is contractually forbidden to collaborate with you on the History of Pinball.

Thank you for your interest in Playboy.

Sincerely,

Helen Hansen

Helen Hansen
Secretary to Michael Laurence

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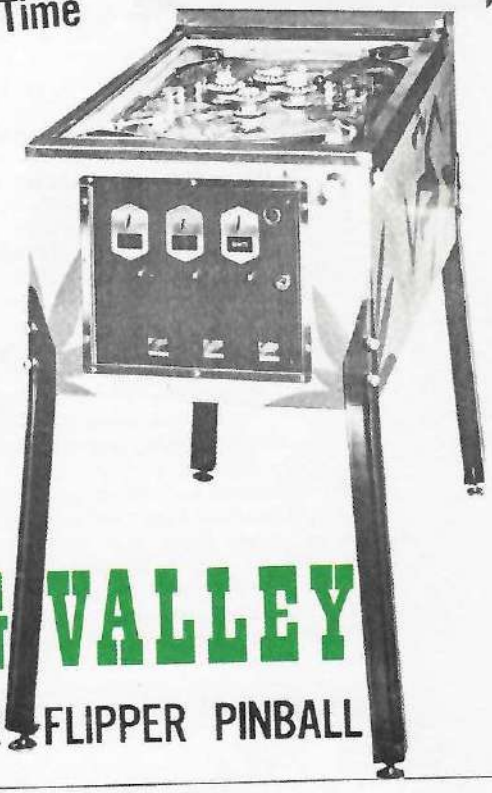

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Amsterdam 19-1-'73

Dear Peter Blake,
I don't think you remember me, but I visited you in '62 or so to ask you to work with the Situationist times a magazine I edited at that time and actually still do.
It is through Robert Kennedy that I heard about the fact that you are ,like ourselves, a pinball wizard.
We are preparing a complete issue on the subject of pinball machines, and would very much like it if you would be willing to work with it too.
We need simply everything about pinball,all possible information, in form of images and texts.Anything on the history of pinball ,all facts about the different use in all countries,so it would be very fine if you could tell us about the British pinball situation.
Actually if you have ever used them in your work would you be willing to send us photo's of that.
We try hard to get the thing out in spring,so there is not too much time,I really do hope to hear soon from . So sorry that I have not got your adress in Bath,but I hope this will reach you fast enough.

With many best regards hoping to hear soon fro you,sincerely yours,

Jacqueline de Jong
Singel 155
Amsterdam

The Station.
Wellow.
Bath.
Feb 3rd. 1973.

Dear Jacqueline de Jong.

I do remember you, although its a long time ago isn't it?

I'm afraid I can't help you very much. I used to play pin-ball machines, but that too was a long time ago.

In the early sixties I used certain images from pin-ball games, very simple ones like stripes of colour, or chevrons or rising suns - a ~~black~~ back-flash of the "super-chief" train. I also have but little else.

Peter Philips was the real "pin ball wizard" he now lives in ZURICH and is with the Bischofberger gallery there. You should contact him.

If you want any more specific information perhaps you would write to me again, in the meantime sorry not to be more help.

Yours.

Peter Blake.

7-12-'72

Dear Mr. Piero Scaruffi,
excuse me ever so much for replieing your kind letter only a year after receiving it. There is of corse no excuse for that what so ever, but please forgive me. I'm very sorry to have to disappoint you even more as I cannot help you to a copy of the labyrinth issue [illegible] having sold out as it was completly sold out a year after appearing.
This is naturally the fact with all issues.
I'mnow preparing a new issue which will be no.7 ,it deals with KINETIC or [illegible] machines, I hope you know what they are, in Italy they must exsist a lott but I have no idea if you can find them in Poland also, could you please lett me know that.
Well, it might seem to you a funny strange subject but not only that the MAGIC and HAZARD question of it is very interesting, but also its history its esthetic and its psychological facts are worth doing an issue on it. Apart from that there is the mathematical and mainly the topological aspect of it which I am very much interested in, and which we will have to analyse.
Now my question is if you would be willing to participate on this subject as much as you can?
Could you please also talk it over with Mr. Tomaszewsky, if he always participated in the most wonderfull way but as I have no idea if those machines exsist in Poland at all I wonder if it is possible.
In case you know of any other people that might be willing to participate, I would be more than happy if you could tell me so.
Please do forgive my ever so late reply and lett me hear from you soon, please send my most respectfull regards and greetings to both Tomaszewsky too.
Full of apology and thanking you in advance for your possible help,
very sincerely yours

Jacqueline de Jong
Singel 152
Amsterdam

q.hans. brinkman

7-1 -72

Dear Walasse ,
Thanks a lott for your sweet letter,ever so sorry for my handwriting,so I now do it on machine.
We are in contact with the Chicago lott that is to say with Williams not yet Gottlieb,do you know any one there? Is it,as far as you know only forbidden in the State of New York or also in other States of the States.
How the hell can these babies of 6years old play on the machines if there are no machines to be played upon?
Ná à propos how is your own baby?
Do you know if our friend Lefebre is in the old world at the moment,as tradtion goes I mean ?
Don't you miss the pinball when you are in NY.Why don't you get one at home too,it's nice you know.
Walasse have you ever used them in painting,do you know other people that have?
It's not snowing here at all ,the sun shines,funny world this is. How is your life and work ?
But back to the pinball ,don't tell me that you have not got a thing to say about it, as you are the very first person that initiated me to it.Do you know why it is against law in NY.because of gambling?IT is not gambling to play pinball it is a game and not mainly of hasard. I mean apart from a free game or a freeball(like in Italy where free games are not allowed)there is nothing to winn, so it is sheer skill don't you think so too. Crazy Americans to prohibit it.
They make the machines design them and are not even themselves allowed to play them.Do you know that there are machines with German texts,TILT is called N GEKIPPT,crazy word.
Marilene Monroe is singing in the radio just now....
Ne Walasse if you have some Japanese girlfriends anywhere in the world lett them write to me please.
How is the Pinball situation in China?
Oh please, try to find alittle bitt of time to write me again about this ever so essential subject,please.
Are you coming to Europe again at some moment?
Lett me know so.But first I hope so much to hear a little more from you.
Thanks a lott and lotts of winter wishes and love,yours

Jacqueline de Jong

Jacqueline de Jong - Singel 155-Amsterdam 20-1-73

Mon cher Topor,
Comment tu vas? Je regrette de t'avoir manqué quand tu étais à Amsterdam, mais c'est la vie. D'ailleurs tout va bien puisque ce matin à 9.30 on prenait, comme presque toutes les jours le café ensemble, Hans Reus et moi en lisant les journaux, tu te rend compte, comme les vrais bourgeois!
Je t'écrits pour te demander si tu pourrais m'envoyer l'adresse de Folon, car on est en train de préparer une numéro de la revue the Situationist Times, sur le sujet des FLIPPERS (pinball machine). Maintenant ce que j'ai à faire maintenant est qu Folon a jour avec Folon a fait une quantité énorme de dessins de flipper, et je veu suis lui demander si il serai d'accord qu'on les reproduit dans ce numéro, tu comprends. Alors si tu le vois, est-ce que tu pourrais être et le lui demander, et si tu as le temps sur son adresse, merci. Aussi je voudrais te évidemment si tu as fais des choses sur le sujet, ou bien si tu voudrai peut être aussi participé. Je sais très bien que tu as tellement peu de temps donc je n'ose presque pas te demander tout ceci, mais le fait quand même. Que est ce que tu en penses, de pouvoir y faire. Tout ce qu'il a à faire avec ce sujet est bon. Tu m'excuse j'espère que je suis si impertinent de te demander tout ceci.

En espérant que tu peux m'aider, et m'envoyer l'adresse de Folon et peut être quelque chose de toi, je t'embrasse bien fortement, avec tout les meilleurs voeux encore pour '73,

Ta Jacqueline de Jong

Sail the Sunny Seas of Prosperity

WITH

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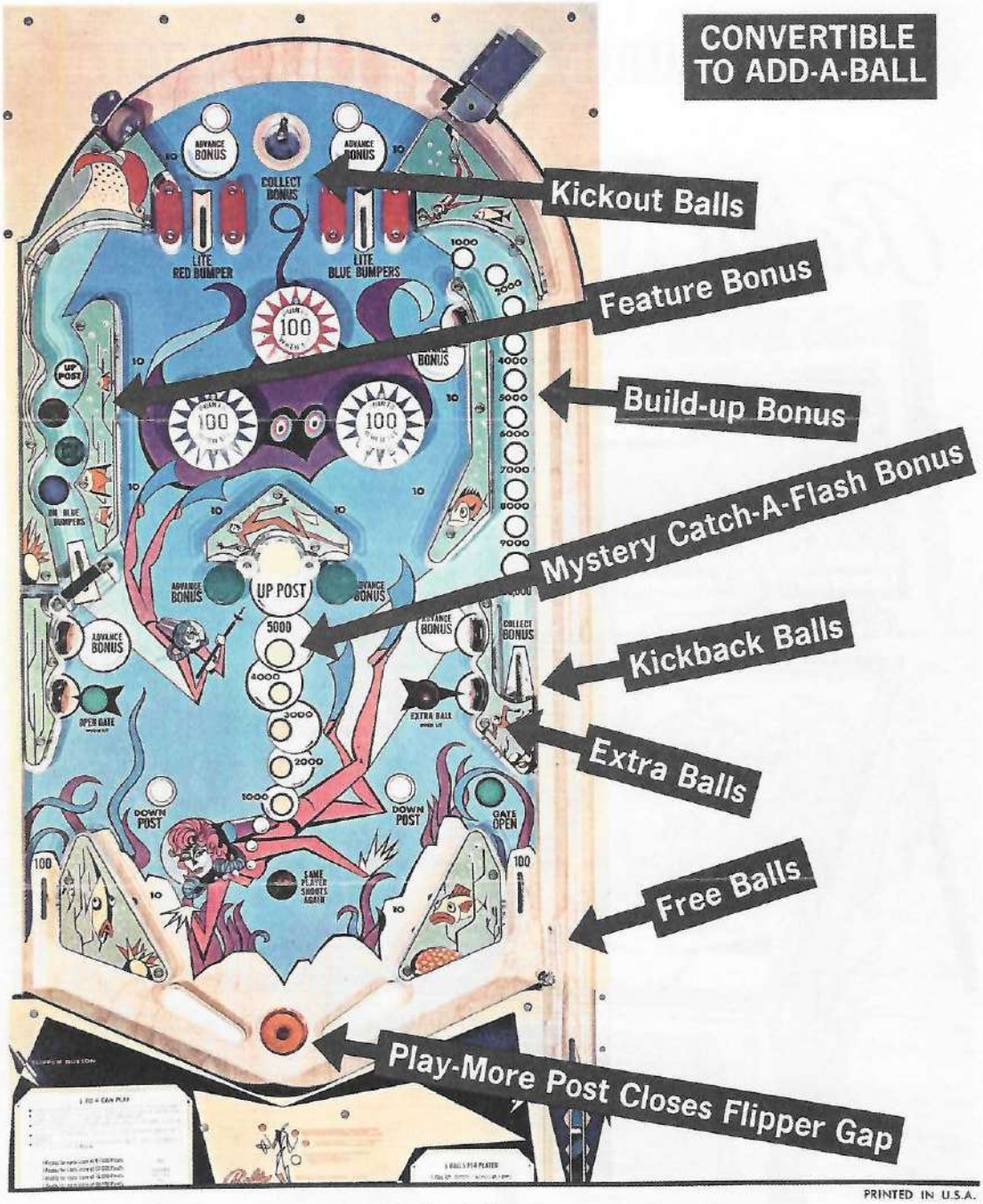
CONVERTIBLE TO ADD-A-BALL

See other side for FEATURE-GRAM



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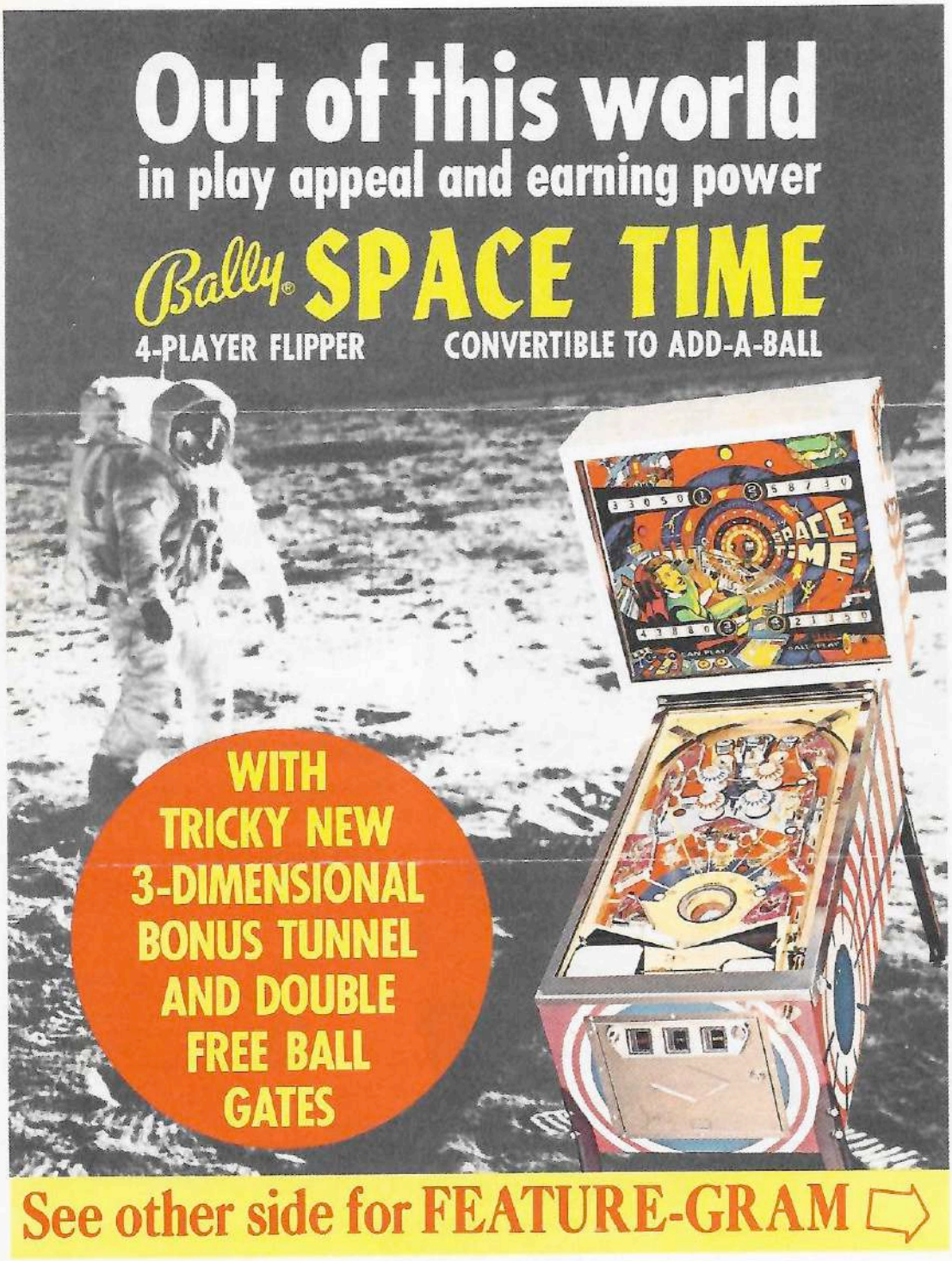
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See other side for FEATURE-GRAM

3-DIMENSIONAL BONUS TUNNEL

Before each ball is shot, Bonus values flash in rapid succession from surface of playfield downward through Tunnel at bottom of the playfield—1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000 and repeat.

NEW "STOP BONUS" SKILL SHOT

Ball crossing rollover in shooter runway stops Bonus flash; and, as each ball is shot, player's skill objectives are (a) to stop Bonus Flash at a high value, (b) to avoid "Start Tunnel" targets, (c) to hit "Collect Tunnel" targets.

After ball is on playfield, Bonus values flash again, when any one of 4 "Start Tunnel" targets is hit. Whether Bonus is flashing or stopped, player collects Bonus value lit when any one of 5 "Collect Tunnel" targets is hit.

DOUBLE FREE BALL GATES

Ball shot through Upper Gate scores 3000, collects Bonus and returns ball to shooter-tip. Ball shot through Lower Gate scores 1000, collects Bonus, returns ball to shooter-tip.

DOUBLE KICKOUT HOLE ACTION

Twin Kickout Holes at top of playfield start Bonus flash, energize balls with frenzied scoring action.

MYSTERY-SKILL EXTRA BALLS

Ball hitting Left Target, when lit on mystery basis, delivers Extra Ball to shooter-tip.

KICKBACK KICKER ACTION

Kickback Kicker in left lane collects Bonus, kicks ball to top of playfield.

PLAY-MORE POST

Play-More Post closes flipper-gap, holds ball a busy captive on a score-studded playfield.

OVERALL MAXIMUM DIMENSIONS
Height, 69 in. (175.26 centimeters)
Length, 54 in. (137.16 centimeters)
Width, 29 in. (73.66 centimeters)
WEIGHT (not packed for shipment)
275 lbs. (124.575 Kilograms)

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2e Open Amsterdams flipperkampioenschap

Deze officieuze wereldkampioenschappen worden georganiseerd door Het Amsterdamsch Litterair Café onder auspiciën van het studenten-weekblad Propria Cures.
Inschrijving is mogelijk t/m 9 dec. in de kiosk van het Litterair Café en in het Athenaeum Nieuwscentrum, inschrijvingsgeld fl 5,-.
Bij de inschrijving krijgt men rugnummer en starttijd.

Trainen is mogelijk dagelijks vanaf 6 dec. 16.00 u.
De wedstrijden worden gespeeld van 9 t/m 14 dec. vanaf 20.00 u.
FINALE: vrijdag 14 december.

Er wordt gespeeld in de ruimte achter 't Litterair Café (Zandstraat 4)
De kampioenschappen worden gespeeld op de volgende kasten:

1.'Monte Carlo'
2.'Fireball'
3.'5000 years B.C.'
4.'Nip-It'
5.'Space-Time'

De selectie geschiedt naar plaatsingcijfers, berekend over de 5 kasten tesamen.
Na de voorrondes gaan de beste 50 naar de 1/4 finales - 20 naar de 1/2 finales en 5 naar de finale. De jury wordt gevormd door Jan in 't Hout en Tim Krabbé.

HOOFDPRIJS: de 'Capersville' (een prima flipperkast met 4 spelen)

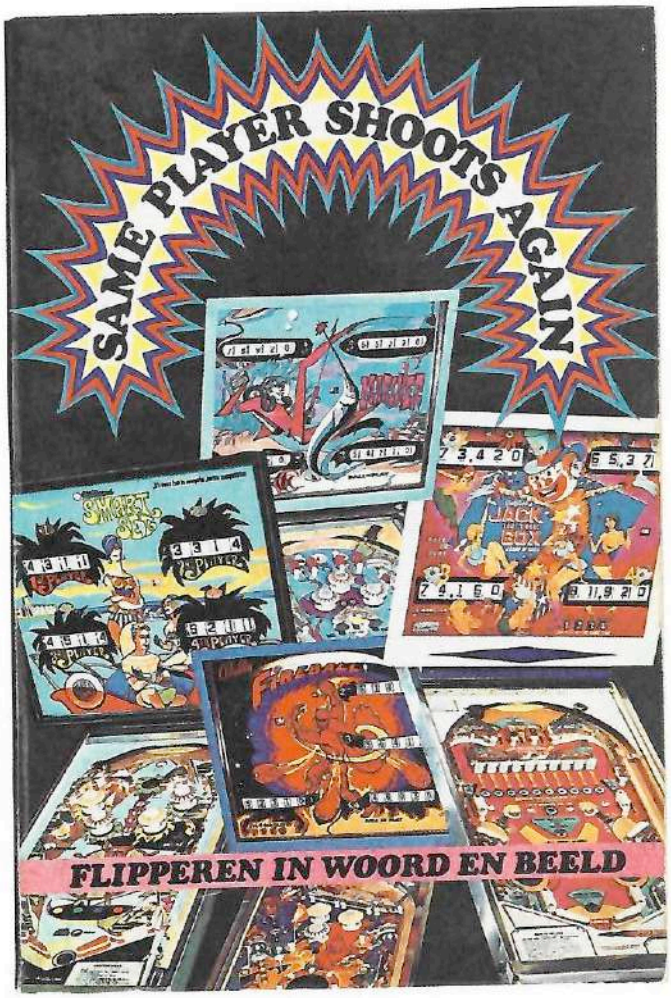
Na afloop van deze kampioenschappen bestaat er voor de aanwezigen de mogelijkheid de kampioenschappen Combine-flipperen te spelen (heren-dubbel, dames-dubbel en gemengd-dubbel). Dit wordt algemeen als een nieuwe fase in de flippersport beschouwd.

N.B. 1 december verschijnt het boek 'SAME PLAYER SHOOTS AGAIN' (flipperen in woord en beeld). Dit is een uitgave van het Litt. Café en bevat vele onmisbare tips voor de deelnemers aan de kampioenschappen, o.a. worden er de bovengenoemde 5 kasten uitvoerig in besproken. prijs fl 12,50

1 december wordt er door de wereldkampioen van verleden jaar - Peter Hagtingius - demonstratie geflippert in het Athenaeum Nieuwscentrum

Robert Polin Michael Rain
Wie man besser flippert!
Tricks · Technik · Theorie
dumont taschenbücher

NIK COHN
Arfur
HET FLIPPER-STERRETJE
Een fascinerende roman over flipperen van de schrijver van het boek over rock-muziek
Awopbopaloobop
Alopbamboom


SAME PLAYER SHOOTS AGAIN
FLIPPEREN IN WOORD EN BEELD

studio han brinkman naarderstraat 53 laren n.h. tel. 02153-2289

Beachte heer Bordek,

via de heer Willemse uit rotterdam ben ik aan uw adres en naam gekomen.
Dat ik u schrijf heeft te maken dat u een van de grootste flipper machines kenner en ontwerper bent.
Ik ben namelijk uitgever van het tijdschrift "The situationist times" en ben op het ogenblik bezig met nummer 7, dat over flippers gaat.
Ik ben xx bezig om alle gegevens te verzamelen, d.w.z. foto's tekeningen, oorsprong, en de geschiedenis van de flipper.
De heer Willemse zij mij u te schrijven omdat u alles over flippers weet.
Hopenlijk kunt u medewerken aan het tijdschrift, zodat xxx ik hierbij een vragenlijst insluit, mocht deze onvoldoende zij dan vernoem ik dat graag van u.
Hierbij deel ik u mede dat uw naam in het tijdschrift als medewerker vermeld zal worden, en als het tijdschrift klaar is ontvangt u een aantal exemplaren.
Mocht het zo zijn dat u nog meer mensen weet waartoe ik mij in de u.s.a. kan richten, dan hoop ik dat u xix de namen en adressen aan mij doorgeeft.
"The situationist times" ontstond in 1962 met xx.xxxxxxxxxxxxx als onderwerp o.a. ; vlechtwerk en knopen, labyrinten (ringen en kettingen,) litho's. met medewerking van o.a.; prof.P.V.Glob, scandinavian institute of comparative vandalism, prof.Lech Tomaszewski, Prof.Dr. W.Dietzmann, Dr.H.L.C.Jaffé, Prof.Lars-Ivar Ringbom, P.Simondo, Aldo Van Eyck archgt. Julius Schwabe, G.R.Hocke, Gaston Bachelard, D.G.Emmerich archt.

Hopende snel iets van te mogen ontvangen
teken ik,

238587

bank: amro bank n.v. laren n.h.

27-Nov.72

Dear Mr.Kordek,

Mr.Willemse from Rotterdam was so kind to give us your address and told us to contact you, because, as he said, you happen to be one of the biggest authorities on and designers of pinball (flipper) machines.

The fact is that being the editors of the art magazine The Situationist Times, we are preparing an issue, no.7 on Pinball machines, which means just anything in any way that deals with the subject, as well in images as in text. I try thus to gather as much information as possible, i.e. pictures, drawings facts etz. about the origine and history of the pinball machine.

We already asked several people to contribute to the issue writers, psychiatrists, painters, musicologues, mechanicians, mathematicians etz. We will make a map of the centre of Amsterdam which will indicate all the spots where a machine is, and a small written text about mark and quality of each machine, how many balls, the highest score etz.

Only the Flipper balls we leave out as they are not so interesting to us.

Of corse this is apurly local aspect of the issue, but in reality we need all international facts that we can possibly get.

Therefor I would very much like to ask you if you would be so kind as to contribute to this issue, and for this purpose I include a questionary, which I kindly ask you to fill in. It goes of corse without saying that we will be more than gratefull for any supplemantary information.

You will be evidently be named as contributor and receive a certain amount of copies once the magazine will be ready which we hope will be in spring.

In case you happen to know other people in the U.S. or elsewhere to whom you think I could adress myself in view of this project, I hope you will be willing to give me their names and adresses.

To conclude a final word on the magazine: it started in '62 always came out in rather small quantities, each issue got completely sold out, and Wittenborn in New York always sold it for the States in comparativly large amounts, the subjects were for example, an issue on labyrinths, one on interlaced patterns and knots, aone on rings and chains etz. The last issue no.6 was different as it consisted of 4 colou lithographies by young artists, and the subject was only technical as all 32 contributors had to use the same four colours and the same size.

This pinbal issue will be quit large, we hope, as for example was the Labyrinth one with 184 pages and 430 images.

Hoping very much to hear from you soon and thanking you in advance for your kind cooperation, sincerely yours

Hans Brinkman and Jacqueline de Jong
Singel 155
Amsterdam /Holland
tel 254556

SEROSE HOLDING LTD.
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TELEPHON 042/21755-56
TELEX 78937

November 7, 1973

Mr. Hans Brinkman
Singel 155
Amsterdam
Holland

Dear Mr. Brinkman:

We have received your letter - not dated - complaining about not receiving replies to your letters addressed to our Mr. Steve Kordek

I have read your letter as well as the attached questionnaire and would like to make the following comments:

1. This is not merely a questionnaire related to our own production or development of the flipper.

2. Your questionnaire, although very poorly phrased, expect the person attempting to answer same to write (for your benefit) a complete article on the history of the origin of the flipper, its uses and development through the years.

3. Our executives are all highly paid people and therefore, I am sorry to say, I can't see anyone having the time to do this sort of research, unless it is for our own specific need.

4. It is therefor clear and true to our custom of only producing the best, that you will not get us to send you back any information that is not absolutely true, correct and well checked.

5. I am further sorry to say that I fail to see what good our article on flippers in a magazin as you have described, can do to the industry, especially judging by the grammatical manner in which your letter was written.

../2

Suddenly, you're somewhere else.

Pan Am

JOOST MATHIJSEN

THE GAME OF PINBALL: A PSYCHOLOGICAL ESSAY

> The height of narcissism is still: to admit it honestly.
> —H.J. Dalewijk, psychiatrist

Even if, regarding the game of pinball, one is not hindered by a specific expertise, it is possible to say reasonable things about it. As I will now show you.

I was never a devoted pinball player. I never "practised" playing pinball, nor did I take part in such competitions. In fact, I always somewhat perceived that fiddling about at those colourful ramshackle boxes from the corner of my eye, accompanied by feelings of astonishment and vague irritation. What on earth comes over those people, I would think. Being captivated by the sounds, lights and movements in the pinball machine (at the time so clearly visible in my 3-and-a-half-year-old son in the cheerless French village café) cannot completely explain the worldwide interest in this mechanical plaything.

Free thought

Nadenken [to think, reflect] is often not much more independent than *na-apen* [to ape, mimic]. The thinker all too often lets himself be browbeaten unquestioningly by the—never entirely relevant—experiences, observations, laws of thought, and the thought conducts *of others*.

This prevents the thinker from achieving an original outlook of his own and in this way perhaps to depict a piece of the truth for his friends and acquaintances.

There should be more *fore*thought: without preconceived regulations and laws, *free* (from prejudice) to discover *new* laws and at once to add a pinch of salt. And even if one lets one's thoughts wander over such a complicated phenomenon of life as the game of pinball, such an unconventional cerebral activity seems more appropriate than sociological, psychological, game-theoretical, system-analytical or metaphysical approaches.

Free thought can skip from one subject to the other: nothing is too crazy, it is game for anything. Free thought has its own "serendipity," its own "*bonheur, qui n'est pas avec ceux qui s'acharnent*" [happiness, which lies not with those who are obsessed], reaches "its target from barricades haphazardly with random salvos." What free thought finds is well found, even if it were not true, which is unlikely. Moreover, free thought is always in good company: that of *associations*, which expand the restrictive here and now panoramically to other times and places and connect our whims with the depths of our animality. Free thought turns a human being into "an animal that makes detours," because the detour (e.g. the rounding movement around a swamp full of contradictory motives) is often the shortest route.

Associations

My first association, when I started pondering the game of pinball, was a cartoon, which depicts a row of pinball machines in the form of women lying on their backs with their legs spread who are getting "thrusted" by their male players. The next image to come to me was that of a TV dolphin, immediately pushed aside by one of its classical predecessors. An amiable aquatic animal, cutting its way through azure seas with a naked demigod on its back. That image stems from times when sensual pleasures had not yet been limited by office hours and moral-theological reference works. When the activities of *knowing* and of *making love* were rendered with the same word by lively Hebrews (the old Dutch *bekennen* [to know, but also to confess]; how strange that a verb is first associated with *lust* and a couple of centuries later with *guilt*).

The next image is a phrase from an American erotic satire, one of those little works with a built-in ban on scratching that causes itchiness. The phrase (teasingly tossed by a sexually very liberated lady at a frustrated person of the same sex) is "Flip your clit!" and leads us to the subject of female self-gratification. The verb "to flip" here obviously does not at all have the psychopathological meaning attached to it in drug-user circles. Flipping here does not

mean: coming apart at the seams, panicking, but rather: *fingering gently*, with as a possible consequence a particularly pleasant and short-lived ecstasy, a peak experience, whose sharp edges have been stroked away. *Mariage à trois, à deux, à une* . . . . . ah!

That the words "flip" and "flipper" are also to be connected via all sorts of dictionaries to: a piece of paper, flicking away with one's fingers, floundering, a friend of horses, a web foot, aircraft, beer with liquor and heated with a glowing iron (and even with a dessert that is served under the intolerably sad name *vlaflip*) is not so important here.

Once my attention had been drawn by my associations to the erotic roots of the game of pinball, it strikes me a lot more that the typical *passionate pinball player is a young man* (postulate: 80% of the players of the so-called game of pinball are male persons aged between 10 and 30) who over and over again *launches projectiles from hip level by pulling a mushroom-shaped knob*, after which he accompanies the journey of his ejaculate with coitus-like body movements.

A solipsistic game

With its explicit launching pleasure, the game of pinball is certainly related to the countless other ballistic enlargements of sexual potency. As with the throwing of spears, the shooting of arrows, the cocking of triggers, the launching of torpedoes or rockets, the aim of the game of pinball is *to assert your power at a distance by releasing something unstoppable from yourself.* In the colourful company that lets itself be guided by this powerful motive, we come across warring armies, shooting clubs, fireworks maniacs, hunters and toy manufacturers, as well as countless youths armed with catapults, blowpipes, bows and arrows, stones and air rifles. And the passionate pinball players.

But what *ultimately* drives the passionate pinball player? What motive distinguishes him from other ballistic-driven people? Neither the above-mentioned, often half- or sub-conscious motive of the exercise of power from a distance through one's own excreta, nor the conscious motive: the scoring of as many points as possible, are typical for the game of pinball. The secret climax of the pinball player is an anticlimax, but before we reveal these intimate motives, we must first bring out another chain of associations that revealed itself dazzlingly during the quest for the *pinball motive.*

Something particularly pleasant

Léautaud once made the following comment:

> I never let myself go completely, not for a minute: neither talking, nor writing, not even when I lay in bed with a woman. I will give an example of something which I now still take pleasure in, even though it has been a long time. I was busy writing *In Memoriam*. One evening, it was midnight already, I was occupied with something particularly pleasant. I had almost reached the climax, when suddenly a sentence came to me. And what a sentence! That one can never observe the dead well enough before the coffin is closed. I immediately abandoned my girlfriend to write down that sentence.

Well, soon after I had decided to write a psychological essay on the game of pinball and even sooner after I had been occupied with "something particularly pleasant" and had just reached the climax, the idea came to me that the game of pinball is about *the systematic return of the balls.* This game borrows its power from *the longing to recover the discharged seed*, from the fantasy of a double ejaculation: the spunk is hurled away joyfully, achieves on its journey glorious impregnations or not, but, to the uppermost satisfaction of the pinball player-ejaculator, ultimately returns to its point of departure. The pinball player *bounces to expect the ball* and to welcome it as a fulfilment of his sexual boomerang-illusion.
Every pinball player without a psychological sense of detection will react to this assertion—perhaps even much earlier—with an angry: *flauwekul* [rubbish, bullshit] (kul—cul—cunt—con—queen—kwijne—urning—urn—pot—lesbienne. The feeling turns here anxiously-dizzyingly around an Opening, which something can go *into*. And what happens then? Which something can come out of. And what happens then? What should be most feared: the toothed vagina or the parturition as explosion?)

The superficial pinball player lets out a shout of disappointment, when his ball = spunk ultimately disappears again through the effect of gravity into its deeply hidden armoury. The complexity of this seeming disappointment is clear from the explanation given by a keen

pinball player: "*the ball cannot go into the hole*," whereby he forgets that the whole game of pinball rests precisely on the fact that this disaster must happen sooner or later. Psychology sheds light on this confusion: no narcissist can exist without company (even if it were only his mirror-image), you learn self-love from others (seriously emotionally neglected monkeys cannot even masturbate) and neither does the pinball ball escape a "rite of passage" through a frightening vagina-like hole *before* he is authorized to re-ejaculate. One good turn deserves another.

The Léautaud quote

Immediately after my discovery (bright idea) of the deepest pinball motive, the Léautaud quote came to me (from Tirade dated 15 march 1959, translator not mentioned). Both the quote and the moment at which I recalled this again (after so many years and right *after* an orgasm) once more emphasize the sexual driving forces of the pinball machine. The contents of the quote, the moment at which it came to me and the fact that I am using it in an essay on the game of pinball to demonstrate the essentially narcissistic motivation of the same, all this points to a greater mental affinity between Léautaud and myself than I had so far dared to suspect (in terms of Léautaud reading virtually just as incompetent as at pinball).

Even at the *moment presque suprême*, the solipsistic French writer never lost his cool: he had to keep something in store. Perhaps his deepest longings were so disappointed that his desire degenerated into stinginess and that he could let go neither his feelings, nor his sperm nor his dead. Fortunately, he could let go of his "*zinnen*" [senses, but also sentences]. (How ambiguous everything is!) Had Léautaud practised the game of pinball and thereby perhaps exorcized his primal fear of impoverishment, of total deprivation, then he could perhaps have loved people as insouciantly as cats.

PS I: It is only after the above was completed that someone pointed out to me the pop opera figure Tommy, "*the Pin Ball Wizard in a Miracle Cure*." Insofar as I have been able to understand, the story of *Tommy* comes down to a narcissistic drama.

After a traumatic youth experience, Tommy tries to protect himself from being further hurt by his fellow beings. He does so in succession by *isolating himself sensorially* (thanks to an "inner block" he is dead, blind and mute), *by becoming a legendary pinball player, a pinball wizard, by falling in love with his mirror image* ("gazing at you I get the heat") and lastly, blinded by messiah complexes, *by emulating a pack of blind adulators*.

The game of pinball and the opera *Tommy* belong to the neon signs and oratorios of alienation, which is temporarily lifted in the collective experience of pinball championships and evening concerts.

PS II: An important gap in the psychological exploration of the game of pinball is undoubtedly hinted at in the postulate that 80% of players consist of people of the male sex aged between 10 and 30. So 20% of pinball players evidently are not included here. Now we are less interested in the precocious toddlers and lively elderly people, who certainly form an important part of those 20%, than the *female pinball maniacs*, about whose existence we have received convincing proof from trusted sources.

Do big exceptions, who want to experience every hour of the month, confirm the rule here? Or should we rather assume that the explanation of this confusing phenomenon, whether or not hidden under thick layers of penis envy, appears to consist of the *complete acceptance of the difference between the sexes*? No trifle, indeed! One can even say that this potential new access to old truths must be entered out of necessity. However, this induces the following psychological search: for the motives of the *passionate female pinball player*.

(Translated from the Dutch by Patrick Lennon.)

ELLEF PRESTSÆTER

SAME PLAYER SHOOTS AGAIN

Suddenly you're somewhere else: On September 18, 2016 Jacqueline de Jong and her friend João Leão visited the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where they came across a machine called Digi-Comp II. Essentially a mechanical digital computer, the Digi-Comp II is an educational toy whose calculations are carried out by balls rolling down an inclined field.[1] *On their way down the balls encounter plastic cams that are the mechanical equivalents of electronic flip-flops. For De Jong, the machine triggered memories of a similar, but perhaps less edifying, game. All of a sudden she remembered that she almost half a century earlier had worked on a never realized seventh issue of* The Situationist Times *devoted to the game of pinball. Long forgotten, the material put together for the issue was still sitting in a box in her Amsterdam home and had not been touched for decades.*

The Passions of a Female Pinball Player

The figure of the passionate female pinball player comes up towards the very end of the Dutch psychotherapist Joost Mathijsen's essay on pinball, the manuscript of which was discovered among the documents compiled for the planned Pinball Issue (this volume, 261–304). Having come up with a general (that is to say, male-oriented) account of "The Psychology of Pinball," Mathijsen proposes a search for the "motives of the *passionate female pinball player*."[2] Like the Sigmund Freud who once famously remarked that he had left the question of what a woman wants unanswered, Mathijsen left the enigma of female desire for others to solve. While I have no ambition to take that task on, a hypothesis can perhaps be ventured regarding one of the "female pinball maniacs" of whose existence Mathijsen claimed to have received decisive proof. In Jacqueline de Jong's case, pinball seems to have provided two main attractions: the sheer pleasure of playing and what she perceived as the game's "topological aspects."

1

Photo: Nico Koster/MAI

2

This joy of playing, however, cannot be reduced to the questions of narcissism and sexual symbolism addressed by Mathijsen. Quite simply, as Hans Brinkman puts it in his program text for the Pinball Issue, "Playing Pinball is delightfullllllllllll!" (this volume, 264–65)[3] This is not to say that sex is not part of the equation (it is not for nothing that *Playboy* magazine was interested in the phenomenon [this volume, 279–81]) or that the world of pinball is not highly gendered. Consider Nico Koster's portrait of De Jong in her studio (fig. 1), posing next to a pinball machine (Gottlieb's 1962 Liberty Bell) and one of her painted diary diptychs (*Oedememonologists*, 1971). De Jong's look into the camera is flirtatious, but also reveals unease. Here, the artist is not actively engaged in painting or playing, but posing in a way not completely dissimilar from the conventional depiction of young women as the alluring appendage to a car or a pinball machine (see, for instance, Bally's flyer advertising their 1970 pinball machine Big Valley [this volume, 284][4]). Compare another photo of the same woman, completely flipped out in the intoxicating act of playing (fig. 2). Far from depicting the pinball machine as a feminine object of attraction, this snapshot arguably takes us closer to the "motives of the passionate female pinball player." (Overall, in the collection of material assembled for the Pinball Issue of *The Situationist Times*, it is interesting to note the strong presence of female players. From Arfur, the "teenage pinball queen" of Nik Cohn's 1970 novel of the same name, via the model dressed in "*Jeans für Ausgeflippte*," to magazine clippings of a pregnant pinball-playing woman and of an elderly lady

1 The machine at the Stata Center of MIT is a giant recreation of a toy originally invented by John T. Godfrey and manufactured in the 1960s.
2 Emphasis in the original.
3 Or, as the Dutch original has it: "Flipperen is verukkulluk!!"
4 Compare also the juxtaposition of a pin-up and a pinball-esque machine illustrating Asger Jorn's "The Situationists and Automation" (discussed below). On the "bikini-babes" adorning the first issue of the *Internationale situationniste*, see Frances Stracey, *Constructed Situations: A New History of the Situationist International* (London: Pluto, 2014), 94–105. Interestingly, Stracey reaveals that Michèle Bernstein was responsible for putting these images into the journal.

playing seated, the collection documents a range of roles available to players of the female gender.

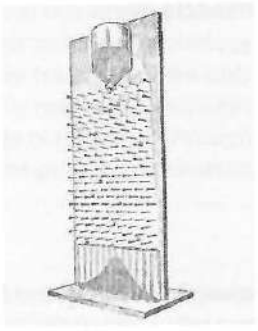
As already indicated, De Jong's interest in pinball was related to her interest in topology. It is telling that in her and Brinkman's 1973 letter to prospective contributors to the Pinball Issue of *The Situationist Times*, they introduce the project by referencing the earlier topological editions of the magazine:

> We are preparing an issue of our magazine The Situationist Times (no. 7) on Pinball machines, that is to say anything on its history and any possible images of all pinballs ever made. . . .
>
> Our magazine is a semi non-commercial art (avant-garde) one. It had for example an issue on Labyrinth, one on chains and rings, one on interlaced patterns etc. The Pinball issue will have a plan of Amsterdam city with all cafés etc. with pinballs, and then of which mark they are, which type, when a free game, the bonuses etc. . . .
>
> We ourselves have a Gottlieb "Gaucho" at home, and are very pleased with it. (this volume, 261)

This suggests that the Pinball Issue would have marked a return to the topological explorations of Issues 3 to 5 and their way of researching and assembling an exhaustive inventory on a particular subject. As such, the proposed issue would have meant going from tracing particular figures through time (knots, labyrinths, chains, etc.) to investigating a topological machine of sorts, a machine with balls creating patterns in time.[5] As De Jong put it in a 1970 TV interview, in which she can be seen playing pinball in Parisian cafés: "I find it fascinating that a little ball can do things in a specific space that you yourself do not control, or only partly control. And that you yourself can change it again. That you stand opposite a machine."[6] Ultimately, these two things—the pleasure of playing pinball and its "topological aspects"—are intimately linked for De Jong. In the 1970 interview, she went on to relate topology to a machinic and libidinous body: "On a whole body, there are a whole bunch of wonderful mechanical things. Eyes, tongues, you name it. But I find this [an erect penis] so beautiful. Hence, very topological. I mean: the volume changes. The thing remains the same, but adopts other positions, other situations and also receives another expression."

The Situationists and Automation

Asger Jorn's signed contribution to the very first issue of *Internationale situationniste*, "The Situationists and Automation," (this volume, 326–28) includes a drawing of the Galton board (fig. 3) . Also known as a bean machine or quincunx, the device was designed by Francis Galton in the late nineteenth century to demonstrate the central limit theorem. The drawing Jorn used was culled from a treatise on probability by the mathematician Marcel Boll[7] and furnished with a caption explaining its scientific as well as situationist application: "This device allows for the automatic generation



3

of a Gaussian curve (position of the balls at the bottom). The artistic problems of the *dérive* occur at the same level as the relatively unpredictable path of each ball." While there is no explicit mention of pinball machines in Jorn's text, we can say that it advances a pinball perspective on the Galton board. This take amounts to identifying not with the scientist observing regularity from the outside but with a single one of the balls on the inside; a participant-observer rather than a detached one. However, it also means adapting a model for the *dérive* that implies the end result will always be perfectly predictable and succumb to the principles of normal distribution.

The irony of this was not lost on Jorn. When the text was republished in his book *Pour la forme* in the summer of 1958, the illustration of the "Dispositif Galton" was moved to a chapter where Jorn deals with questions of chance and critiques the worldview of probability theory. Essentially, he claims that "the science of probabilities is being imposed on the human race in the form of a new ethics" aiming toward "health, good fortune and power."[8] Against such attempts at biopolitical forecasting and control (it is perhaps worth noting that Galton is considered the father of eugenics), Jorn mobilized chance pure and simple: "Pure chance is a technique employed to avoid the past having any influence on the future."[9] In this context, and under the subheading "The Straight Road and the Play of *Dérives*," Jorn compares the Galton board to the surrealist figure of "*vases communicantes*":

> To the surrealists the principle of "communicating vessels" was a very informative image to illustrate the energetic effects of the liberation of psychic power. However, Galton's device is much more explicit. The social moralism of surrealism, transformed, so to speak, all its faithful adherents into bell curves,

5 In a letter De Jong wrote to the Italian architect Piero Meogrossi dated December 7, 1972, topology is singled out as a main concern of the Pinball Issue. In addition to "the GAME and HASARD question," and the game's history, aesthetic, and psychology, De Jong highlights "the topological aspect of it, which I am very much interested in, and which we will have to analyse" (this volume, 288).

6 Jacqueline de Jong, in Lies Westenburg and Hans Redeker, "Jacqueline and the Situationists," VPRO, 1970. Transcribed by Peter Westenberg and translated by Patrick Lennon.

7 Marcel Boll, *L'Exploitation du hasard* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1942), 47.

8 Asger Jorn, *Concerning Form: An Outline for a Methodology of the Arts*, trans. Peter Shield (Silkeborg, Denmark: Museum Jorn, 2012), 111.

9 Jorn, *Concerning Form*, 110.

> because it had not understood that what is important is not the communication, but what passes between the discharge of energy and the new levelling-out, *the play of transmissions*.[10]

In other words, Jorn insists on the complete disregard of anything beyond the experiment itself. In this sense as well, his perspective resonates with the experience of playing pinball. It is a matter of staying in the game, of prolonging "the play of transmissions." The end of the game is inevitable, but that does not keep one from playing: "what happens next does not interest us at all, even if it is the deluge."

Ultimately, however, Jorn was playing to change the rules, not just of pinball or any other game, but of social life itself. As the art historian Sven Lütticken recently emphasized, the situationists were part of a ludic turn in culture marked by a tension between "play as aesthetic ideal and the reality of existing games."[11] The situationist affirmation of play was projected beyond actually existing games, that is, the "pseudogames" that society, according to Jorn, uses to fill the abyss opened up by the "new leisure" (this volume, 327). This, however, is not to say that the articulation of a ludic revolution was unrelated to such games. In fact, it is possible to trace a recurring interest in, as well as distinct approaches to, the game of pinball throughout the history of situationism.

In a key 1956 text on *détournement*, Guy Debord and Gil Wolman discuss a project "conceived in 1951 but eventually abandoned for lack of sufficient financial means, which envisaged a pinball machine arranged in such a way that the play of the lights and the more or less predictable trajectories of the balls would form a metagraphic-spatial composition entitled *Thermal Sensations and Desires of People Passing by the Gates of the Cluny Museum Around an Hour after Sunset in November*."[12] Like Jorn's model for the *dérive* and the montages of Debord's 1961 film *Critique de la séparation* (in which footage of the playfield of a pinball machine is juxtaposed with aerial views of Paris), this idea of a *détourned* pinball machine suggested parallels between the city and the game. Moreover, as architecture and urban theorist Simon Sadler has noted, some of the maquettes for Constant's urban utopia of New Babylon seem to indicate the "analogy of the ambient city as a pinball machine, pushing its disoriented inhabitants from one obstacle to another."[13]

Historically, the first pinball boom occurred in the US during the Great Depression. Pay Day (released by Buckley in 1935), one of the games mentioned in Brinkman's essay and depicted in his photographic inventory of pinball machines, stood in for a payday that would otherwise never arrive (this volume, 264, 271). Being a "payout" table, this machine even awarded the successful player with hard cash. In his history of pinball, Roger C. Sharpe laments the consequences of the introduction in the 1930s of this gambling element into the world of pinball: "The good clean fun of the amusement-only games had been replaced by a sleazy image of corrupt players in search for a way to make money without working for it."[14] At the heart of pinball discourse is a complex historical problematic of (un-)productive time, which had to interest an avant-garde group for which the question of "free time" was a defining one. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh was probably informed in part by situationist perspectives when he remarked in 1970 that the pinball machine was the only "genuine invention" coming out of a miserable situation in which play was either reduced to the passive consumption of sporting events on TV or replaced by activities that imitate "the stupidity of the everyday work situation in the so-called free time, in order not to call it into question by a spark of deviant experience." According to the young art critic, the pinball machine "combines acoustic and visual experiences from the sphere of production with the infinitely variegated and refining actions and techniques of the purposeless and profit-free play with the ball."[15]

For the situationists and others, automation harbored the possibility of another form of liberated time: people would no longer be unemployed—in fact, they might not even have to work. This idea informed Constant's vision of New Babylon, in which, to quote a recent assessment by art historian Eric C. H. de Bruyn, "the ludic playground that was lifted above the earth . . . could exist only thanks to the existence of a fully automated system below ground."[16] The description suggests a further analogy between New Babylon and a pinball machine, in which, to quote the psychologist Friedrich Wolfram Heubach's description in his "Essay on the Pinball Machine": "The glamor and the burlesque of the playfield, and the playful levity of its forces, are the shiny surface hiding the somber calculus of an electronic netherworld." (this volume, 329–30)

However, life at the interface is not necessarily uncomplicated. The encounter between *Homo ludens* and the machine can be viewed in more antagonistic terms. As Brinkman puts it: "You play not only against fellow players, but also against the mechanism." (this volume, 265) This fact led media theorist Friedrich Kittler—who according to my trusted sources had a pinball machine at home—to a radical conclusion: "If man is only in the fullest sense a human being when he plays, he is no longer human when he plays with a machine." (this volume, 328) The pinball machine, we can say, became a crucial site for playing out different scenarios of man-machine interaction, automation, and cybernetization, in theory as well as in action.

10 Jorn, *Concerning Form*, 116–17. Emphasis in the original.

11 Sven Lütticken, *History in Motion: Time in the Age of the Moving Image* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2013), 160, 171.

12 Guy Debord and Gil J. Wolman, "A User's Guide to Détournement," in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), 18.

13 Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 149. Sadler refers to a picture that was also reproduced in *The Situationist Times*, no. 4 (October 1963), 162, fig. 421 (this volume, 174).

14 Roger C. Sharpe, *Pinball!* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977), 44. This bad reputation contributed to the prohibition of pinball machines in many US cities, including New York, where the ban was only lifted in 1976. An expert player himself, Sharpe demonstrated his skills in front of New York city council to convince "skeptics who might still believe that pinball machines were games of chance" (63).

15 Benjamin H. D. Buchloh [D. Hainz, pseud.], "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp," *Zeit-Magazin* 25, no. 12 (December 1970): 21. My translation.

16 Eric C. H. de Bruyn, "Constructed Situations, Dynamic Labyrinths, and Learning Mazes: Behavioral Topologies of the Cold War," *Grey Room*, no. 74 (Winter 2019): 69.

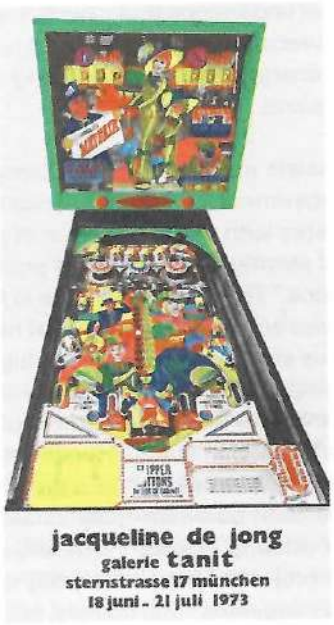
Jorn may have seen the Galton board as an experimental device that served to differentiate situationism from surrealism, a topological machine that brought the "essential problem of situationism" into play, or "*en jeu*," as he put it in 1960, with a pun suggesting that play involved risk and thus potentially loss (this volume, 46). Crucially, however, this did not amount to an affirmation of the game of pinball as such. Indeed, when Jorn refers to pinball in the text "Open Creation and Its Enemies," it is as but one instance of a more general dynamic modeled by the Galton board, which now emerges as the *dispositif* for "situlogical experience" in contemporary society: "As a plaything, this machine, which goes on *tilt*, is found in most Parisian bistros; and as the possibility of calculating variability, it provides the model of all telephone networks." (this volume, 53)

Somewhat schematically, then, we can say that Jorn's interest in pinball is topological, whereas Debord's interest is dialectical, calling for the game's *détournement* or dialectical appropriation. While Brinkman and De Jong shared Jorn's topological interest in pinball, what distances their pinball project from both Jorn's and Debord's approaches to the topic is the editors' celebration of the game itself. The Pinball Issue would have been associated with a culture of fandom rather than a culture of critique. In this respect, the perspectives of Brinkman and De Jong are closer to that of the situationist Alexander Trocchi and the comparative curiosity demonstrated in his 1960 novel *Cain's Book*: "The distinction between the French and American attitude towards the 'tilt' ('teelt'); in America, and England, I have been upbraided for trying to beat the mechanism by skilful tilting; in Paris, that is the whole point." (this volume, 328)[17]

Beyond discerning different situationist approaches to the game of pinball, we can perhaps say that it is possible to distinguish one situationism from another with reference to the game preferences of the people involved. Debord's game of choice would be the Game of War he developed, and in which strategy plays a key role.[18] This can be contrasted with De Jong's passion for pinball, a game which, according to Kittler, is "a training device rather than a game" and "only allows for tactics, but not strategy—that is how forgetful the machine is." (this volume, 329) For Debord, pinball should be employed strategically in the dialectical game of history; for De Jong, it is a playfield or training device for the topological imagination.

Jacqueline de Jong heeft haar eigen flipperautomaat

4



5

Flipartistique[19]

After moving to Amsterdam in 1971, De Jong appeared repeatedly in the Dutch press (fig. 4), preaching the gospel of pinball: "Painter gets pinball machine in her canal house," one headline proclaimed.[20] In the diary diptychs she painted in the early 1970s—the *Amsterdam Chronicles*—pinball machines are everywhere. Less than two decades earlier, the presence of such a machine on a theater stage had been described by Roland Barthes as a provocation in that it "symbolizes nothing at all." Instead it was seen as "a literal object whose function is to engender, by its very objectivity, certain situations." (this volume, 325) A similar literalness can be observed in the work of George Segal, whose signature plaster figures are sometimes coupled to pinball machines (this volume, 285); two of them seemingly appear by the pinball machines depicted in De Jong's 1971 diptych *Beach Boys and Girls on a Bloody Sunday* (fig. 10). The literal machine was perhaps by now less scandalous, more a cipher of continuity between art, life, and the machine. In any case, the *Amsterdam Chronicles* document a life lived close to the machine. When the diptychs were exhibited at the Amsterdam gallery K256 in the summer of 1973, the show included a pinball machine and visitors were welcome to play. (similar exhibits were held without the pinball machine at Galerie Gammel Strand in Copenhagen and Galerie Tanit in Munich).

17 In Michèle Bernstein's 1960 novel *All the King's Horses*—often described as a situationist *roman à clef*—the protagonist also plays pinball. Michèle Bernstein, *All the King's Horses*, trans. John Kelsey (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008), 65.

18 On Debord's Game of War, see Lütticken, *History in Motion*, 184–87; McKenzie Wark, *The Spectacle of Disintegration* (London: Verso, 2013), 175–88; Alexander Galloway, "Debord's Nostalgic Algorithm," *Culture Machine*, no. 10 (2009): 131–56.

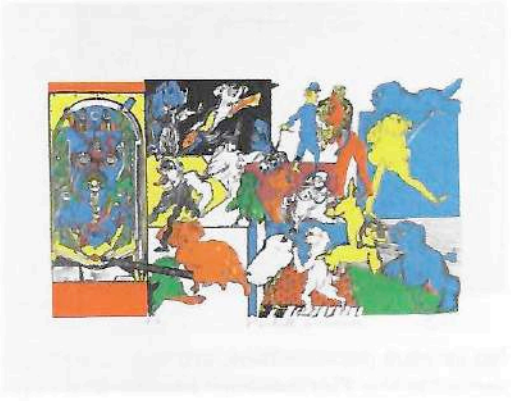
19 The word "flipartistique" appears handwritten on item 23 in Jacqueline de Jong and Asger Jorn, *The Case of the Ascetic Satyr: Snapshots from Eternity* (New York: JDJ/D.A.P., 2015).

20 "Schilderes halt een Flipper in haar grachtenhuis," *Het Stadsblad* (Utrecht), February 8, 1974.

While De Jong—with her pronounced dislike of symbolism—would likely have sympathized with Barthes' insistence that the pinball machine "symbolizes nothing at all" (such as "the complexity of the social system"), she would probably have wanted to distance herself somewhat from the interest of Barthes and his followers in analyzing myths. As Heubach puts it, "it makes a difference whether you play or read a myth," (this volume, 330) and De Jong and Brinkman were certainly players rather than mythographers.

One of the motivations of these particular pinball players that should probably not be underestimated was pictorial: the pinball machine as motif. Throughout the diary diptychs one can sense De Jong's fascination with the machines' angular constructions and ornamental features. Indeed, one may well ask whether the machines are so ubiquitous in her diaries because she played a lot or rather because she enjoyed painting them. Most of the time she depicts them from a perspective that allows a clear view of the playfield and backglass, as well as a glimpse of the patterns on the walls of the cabinet. In a diary entry dated February 2, 1972, however, recording the purchase of a "hometrainer Gaucho," the machine is seen head-on from the side. Perhaps this is why she claims to have painted it "as stupid as possible"—we can see neither its innards nor backglass. In Brinkman's photographs of pinball machines, repeated exposures of the same machine from different angles reveal his search for the best view. In what can be described as a mode of pinball archaeology, the camera is sometimes turned toward the "electronic netherworld" of a defunct machine (this volume, 271). In another instance, he even climbed atop the cabinet of a Merry Widow (from 1963, by Williams), presumably to get the angle right (this volume, 269). The result may be flawed as a documentary photograph, but perhaps suggests new and inventive dialects of "body English" (to use pinball parlance for bodily interactions with the machine that go beyond the pressing of the flipper buttons) capable of bypassing the tilt mechanism.

In two silkscreen works from 1973, De Jong's starting point is not the pinball machine as a three-dimensional object in space but rather the so-called feature-grams the manufacturer Bally printed on the verso of their promotional flyers, mapping the playfield of the model in question. More specifically, the works *Pinball Wizards I* and *II* (figs. 6 and 7) are derived from the machines Mariner (1971) and Space Time (1972), respectively (this volume, 291–94). This fact, however, is obfuscated by the prints themselves. Even though the contours of the feature-grams are carefully traced in the left part of the picture, in a mode reminiscent of the way De Jong copied interlacing patterns on tracing paper for Issue 3 of *The Situationist Times*, one would have to be deeply familiar with the machine in question in order to recognize it in the depiction. What is drawn out here is not the specifics of what the cultural historian Bernd Jürgen Warneken calls the "packaging" of a pinball machine (this volume, 334), related to the theme or scenario that is presented on the recto of the flyer and that promises to let you "sail the sunny seas of prosperity" or "get out of this world." Rather, the playfield undergoes a repackaging that abstracts the feature-gram from the story in order to instead invest it in a play of fluorescent



6

Pinball Wizards I, 1973, 50 x 70 cm

7

Pinball Wizards II, 1973, 50 x 70 cm

forces and intensities. In *Pinball Wizards I*, one feature is retained, pointing to the utopia of infinite play: "Play-More Post Closes Flipper Gap."

It is a moot question whether the creatures to the right of the feature-grams belong to the packaging or are players—pinball wizards—themselves. The point is rather that the pictorial plane is transformed into a veritable playfield of its own, with forces unleashing a series of events that are barely kept in place by the grid structuring the composition. In this respect, the works resemble the *TV Drawings* De Jong produced in the mid-1960s, in which she engages intimately and—it would seem—affirmatively with the medium of television. Not herself the owner of a TV set, De Jong spent the time she might otherwise have used in front of the TV making these drawings.[21] These works include little that suggests the *détournement* of familiar media imagery or a critique of a televisual *dispositif*, which, according to certain interpretations, leaves the public passive spectators of a centrally controled flow of images. As such they differ fundamentally from the image of TV generally associated with situationism. Compare, for instance, the TV set depicted in *International situationniste* no. 8 with the text "ce soir / spectacle / à la maison" (tonight / spectacle / at home) typed on the screen (fig. 8).[22]

21 Ed Wingen, "Jacqueline de Jong Undercover in Art," in *Jacqueline de Jong Undercover in Art* (Amsterdam: Ludion, 2003), 15.

22 *Internationale situationniste*, no. 8 (January, 1963): 6.

8

No famous personalities, stars, or stereotypes can be discerned in the *TV Drawings*' bewildering mass of ink blots and vectors. Rather, the figures (for there are figures with limb-like features and the drawings burst with life) of De Jong's drawings refuse to coalesce into fully recognizable shapes or bodies, to stabilize in accordance with a firm distinction between figure and ground, or to be fully contained within frames. The grid-like structures that might otherwise suggest a temporality associated with cinema or comic books, a sequence to be read from left to right or beginning to end, instead creates the paradoxical effect of images that are fundamentally scalable, modulable, always in the process of changing. There is never a discrete moment here. The free time that occupied the situationists is spent, not in front of a TV set, but drawing out its mode of becoming from a distance: tele-television. If the drawings have the character of spontaneous doodling or even automatic drawing, it would seem to come from the automatism of the medium as much as from that of the artist. And yet, what is depicted is not simply an abstract principle of change or the expressionism of signal flow. Consider *Driften* (1965), a lithographically reproduced *TV Drawing* (fig. 9). The Dutch noun "*drift*" translates alternately as rage, urge, or drift. While the first two senses do seem somewhat descriptive of what is going on in the picture, the latter sense also makes "*drift*" a possible rendering of the key situationist notion of the *dérive*. One way to read *Driften*, then, would be to see it as a transposition—or indeed, a drifting—of the psychogeographical technique of the *dérive* from the space of the city to the "varied ambiances" of television. As such, it charts a territory that is as passionate, social, and sexual as it is technologically mediated. And if we take into consideration De Jong's interest during those years in the diagrammatic forms of everyday life (knots, labyrinths, chains, etc.), forms that shape and partake in social practices, the supposition is not far away that what the *TV Drawings* are drawing out—in black and white, for obvious reasons—are diagrams of televisual culture. With their fluorescent sensoriums and zigzagging rhythms, the *Pinball Wizards* prints, it would seem, do something similar for the game of pinball. Compared to the shapes of the *TV Drawings*, the figures of the pinball works are more tangible in their stencil-like appearance; despite their lack of depth, these are creatures one might bump into or perhaps hallucinate after an evening of playing pinball. And whereas the *TV Drawings* were predicated on the absence of a TV set, the pinball machine is as present in these works as they were in De Jong's studio and home. No longer a mere motif, the pinball machine emerges here as the fulcrum of an art that draws out, affirms, and intensifies the forces, effects, and sensations of the game.

9

Driften, 1965, 46.5 x 62 cm

Pinball Remains

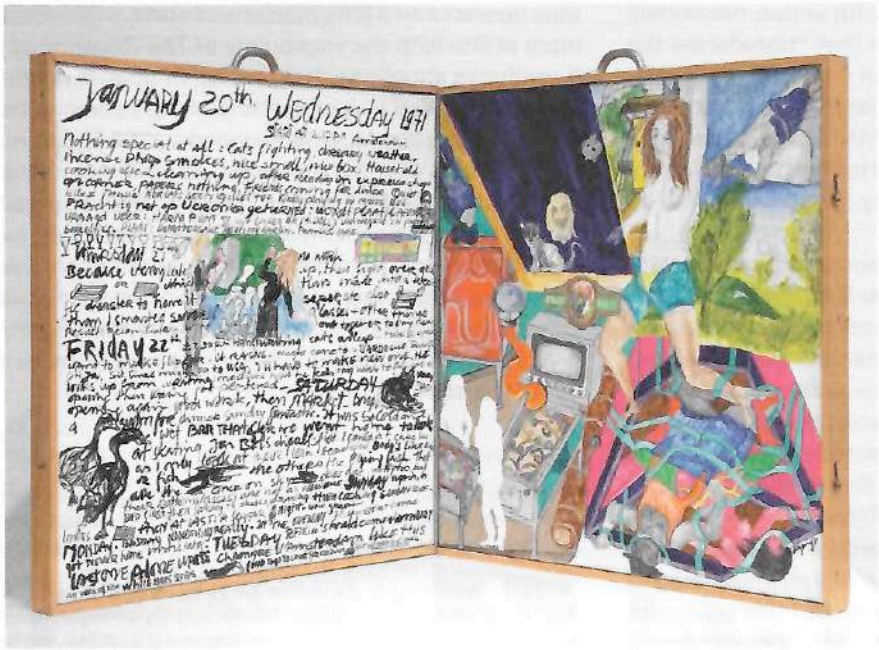
In 1976, Marshall McLuhan commented upon the presence of a pinball machine in a TV studio where he was being interviewed. The "new interest in the pinball machine" was a symptom of nostalgia for the days of the Depression, McLuhan explained, adding:

> The pinball machine is now in a world of electronic simultaneity, and whereas it's an old mechanical machine, one thing at a time, and it belongs to the old hardware days, now it also has a new *ground*. It's the old *figure* in the new *ground*, which makes it an art form. It is now an art form.[23]

This is precisely the shift traced by the Italian artist Gianni-Emilio Simonetti as a passage from "the banality of mechanical fact to the complexity of electrical play"; in a "spectacular critique of pinballs" that is retroactively refracted through Marcel Duchamp's *The Large Glass*, Simonetti's "popular archaeology of the 1950s" points out that pinball's new ground was that of cybernetics and related techniques of conditioning (this volume, 331–33). McLuhan and Simonetti provide useful reminders of the fact that not all pinball machines are the same and that we can speak of multiple pinball eras. In *Beach Boys and Girls on a Bloody Sunday*, De Jong painted a pinball machine with what seems to be a cathode-ray-tube screen for a backglass, thus indicating a collusion of pinball and TV. Later, in the 1980s and onward, pinball games developed deeper narrative structures under the influence of video games. By this time, the electromechanical models had been replaced by solid-state machines. Interestingly, however, the tilt pendulum is more or less the same now as when it was introduced in the 1930s.

I don't believe there's a single pinball machine in the published issues of *The Situationist Times*, but in an archival document related to the Labyrinth Issue De Jong asks about "anything which has to do with the labyrinth" and mentions

23 Marshall McLuhan, "What TV Does Best" (1976), in *Understanding Me*, ed. Stephanie McLuhan and David Staines (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 246. Emphasis in the original.



10

Beach Boys and Girls on a Bloody Sunday, 1971, diptych, acrylic on canvas, 54.5 x 102.5 cm. *Pinball Wizard—The Work and Life of Jacqueline de Jong*, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2019. Photo: Gert Jan van Rooij.

certain "play machines in all the cafés with balls."[24] A pinball machine can indeed be thought of as a labyrinth where playing is not only allowed, but the whole point. Recall the signpost in the the Jardin des Plantes in Paris that was a point of reference for the situationists and which admonished visitors to respect the "*lieu historique*"(historical site): "Games are not allowed in the labyrinth." (ST 4: 73)

Today, of course, pinball has itself become something of a "*lieu historique*." Pinball machines are seldom found in the bars that used to form their habitat; they are more likely to appear in the form of computer simulations on your smartphone, furnishing the staff lounges in Silicon Valley headquarters, or in "barcades" and clubhouses maintained by groups of enthusiasts keeping memories of their youth alive. If the culture of pinball appears as a culture of nostalgia or the outdated, the McLuhan quote indicates that this is not a new thing. Buchloh, after observing a display of backglass designs at a 1970 art fair in Cologne, remarked that pinball machines were being traded as "the latest" on the antiquities market.[25] Warneken for his part has observed a general principle of obsolescence—"the makeup of all older pinball machine models lags behind commodity fashion trends by a couple of generations"—noting that this might allow for a "rudimentary form of historical consciousness." (this volume, 334) We may also take into account Lütticken's observation that play, in its most emphatic sense, has always appeared anachronistic in modern culture, associated with a golden past or a possible future: "At present, in the here and now, play seems homeless, a survivor of the past."[26] To a critic like Lütticken, such anachronism harbors the potential for criticism, historical consciousness, and the notion that things might be otherwise.[27] From the perspective of *The Situationist Times*, however, the very notion of anachronism, with its presupposition that everything has a time or history that is somehow proper to it, borders on the meaningless. Conversely, from a historicist perspective, *The Situationist Times* can only appear as generalized anachronism. Ultimately, however, the magazine proposes an understanding of time and history that is neither historicist nor dialectical, but indeed topological.[28]

A week after the closing of the 2018 exhibition that first made public the material for the Pinball Issue of *The Situationist Times*,[29] a pinball machine was installed less than five hundred meters away, inside Oslo's central train station. To promote a new series of soft drinks by Red Bull, a local advertising agency created "a colorful branded gaming area" which included a "pinball table with a fully wrapped vending machine." According to the agency, "the interactive gamification concept of the campaign produced great customer engagement."[30] It is hard to think of a better demonstration of Lütticken's suggestion that today "the spectacle has become played."[31] In fact, pinball has recently been put forward as the very model for contemporary public relations; according to a group of experts, "marketing in a social media environment resembles the chaotic and interactive game of

24 Typescript letter, no date or addressee. Jacqueline de Jong Papers, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University.
25 Buchloh, "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp," 21.
26 Lütticken, *History in Motion*, 163.
27 Lütticken, *History in Motion*, 161.
28 For an attempt to think time and history in topological terms, see Michel Serres with Bruno Latour, *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time*, trans. Roxanne Lapidus (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), especially 57–62.
29 *Jacqueline de Jong & The Situationist Times: Same Player Shoots Again*, Torpedo, Oslo, May, 11–September 2, 2018.
30 "Red Bull's Organics Drinks Bring Back the Game," JCDecaux, August 2018, https://www.jcdecaux.com/creative-ooh/red-bulls-organics-drinks-bring-back-game#concept. Thanks to Kaluza for bringing this recuperation to my attention.
31 Lütticken, *History in Motion*, 184.

pinball" and is like "playing pinball with active, networked consumers."[32] Indeed, the machine that "transforms the spectator into an active artist"[33] can be seen as an early prototype, or perhaps the very emblem, of what Lütticken aptly describes as "a spectacle of activity rather than passivity"[34]—a world where (to quote Heubach's account of the world figured by pinball) "activity exhausts itself in its performance." (this volume, 330)

But there's another way of connecting pinball with the present that might appeal more to De Jong herself than using it to index historical transformations of capitalism. As one notorious and passionate female pinball player used to put it, "pinball remains."[35] Beyond the cultural out-of-date-ness of its packaging and hardware, playing on an electromechanical pinball machine today still puts into play the machine's *own time*, what the media archaeologist Wolfgang Ernst would call its "*Eigenzeit.*" The human experience of engaging with this time might have changed, but there "is no 'historical' difference in the functioning of the apparatus now compared to then," and this produces a "short circuit between otherwise historically clearly separated times."[36] To quote an ad for Pan Am included in the archive of the Pinball Issue: "Suddenly you're somewhere else" (this volume, 301). Beyond the phantasmagoria of the packaging and its promise of taking you "out of this world" and into another "Space Time," a pinball machine thus operates as a time machine of sorts, or, to use a figure more in line with the vocabulary of *The Situationist Times*, it produces situations that overlap in time. It continues to do so even today, in Jacqueline de Jong's summer house in France, where she recently installed a 1986 pinball machine from Williams called High Speed. As a solid-state machine, it indeed speeds up the game considerably compared to the earlier electro-mechanical machines. We could say with Jorn (borrowing a formulation made in a situationist polemic on history, labyrinths, and topology): "That time possesses different speeds will always be so, and profiting from this is . . . a situationist domain." (this volume, 45) Or quite simply: Same player shoots again.

32 Thorsten Hennig-Thurau, Charles F. Hofacker, and Björn Bloching, "Marketing the Pinball Way: Understanding How Social Media Change the Generation of Value for Consumers and Companies," *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, no. 27 (2013): 237–41.

33 Buchloh, "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp," 23.

34 Lütticken, *History in Motion*, 184. For a slightly different perspective on the "age of pinball" and the periodization of capitalism, see Paolo Virno's description of the post-Fordist worker as a "post-pinball player" (this volume, 335).

35 Nik Cohn, *Arfur: Teenage Pinball Queen* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1970).

36 Wolfgang Ernst, *Digital Memory and the Archive*, ed. Jussi Parikka (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 57. The apparatus discussed by Ernst in the quotation is the Volksempfänger radio.

DENNIS GÖTTEL

FLIPPER ARMS, CONTROL, WARFARE

> Je me souviens des premiers "flippers":
> justement, ils n'avaient pas de flippers.
> —Georges Perec, *Je me souviens*, 1978

1)

One of the ideas for the never realized seventh issue of *The Situationist Times*, planned by Jacqueline de Jong and Hans Brinkman in the 1970s, was to produce a map of Amsterdam that would show all the venues with pinball machines.[1] Even though the Netherlands—unlike France, West Germany, and Italy—may not have been among the hot spots of pinball mania,[2] it can be assumed that the city map would have been dotted with numerous spots. While mapping a profane mass cultural phenomenon instead of public buildings and monuments could perhaps be seen as a subversive gesture in itself,[3] the planned overview still sounds like a fairly conventional use of the cultural technique of the map. However, such a map would not have exhausted the possible topological connections between pinball machines and the city.

Cartography was appropriated by the situationist movement to undermine traditional concepts of locatability and overview. The concept of the *dérive* subverts the everyday practice of purposeful walking from A to B (e.g., getting from one pinball venue to another) and instead proposes the contingent exploration of an urban landscape by drifting. Maps can play a role in this endeavor, not to find shorter pathways but to study the inner workings of a city's topology. Crucially, the politics of the *dérive* involves not only the letting go of goal-oriented movement but also "its necessary contradiction: the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities."[4] The *dérive* is thus about giving up control while gaining it on another level.

The concept of the *dérive* was prominently represented by means of a non-cartographic model discussed by Asger Jorn and illustrated twice in the *Internationale situationniste*: the Galton Board, an experimental setup constructed by the natural scientist Francis Galton in 1889. From the upper edge of a vertically erected board, covered with evenly affixed pegs, beads are dropped. Accumulating in columns at the bottom, the beads form a bell-shaped curve demonstrating the Gaussian distribution. Jorn, however, focused his attention not on the aspect of distribution probability but rather on the unpredictable trajectory ("*trajets relativement imprévisibles*"[5])—the repeatedly singular rolling—of each ball. By means of this appropriation, the Galton Board turns into an "*Indicateur des chemins de dérive*" (indicator of *dérive* pathways).[6] In the context of the situlogy postulated by Jorn, which aims at an anti-Euclidean and topological "geometry of variables, [a] playful and differential geometry,"[7] the Galton Board turns out to be a suitable model for situationist practice, since it combines what Jorn describes as the two opposing tendencies of situlogy: that of the game and that of the analysis, or "the tendency of art, *spinn* [*sic*] and the game, and that of science and its techniques. The creation of variables within a unity, and the search for unity amongst the variations. . . . Situology . . . gives a decisive push to the two tendencies. For example, take the network represented by Galton's apparatus."[8]

Jorn then brings into play a cognate of the Galton Board: "As a pinball machine, it can be found in lots of Paris bistros." In contrast to the English translation, the French original describes this machine as follows: "Comme appareil de jeu, cette machine, qui fait *tilt*, se trouve dans la plupart des bistrots de Paris."[9] Here, the gaming machine remains nameless; only the "tilt" implicitly identifies it as a pinball machine.[10] Now, which role does the pinball machine play as a model, mentioned en passant, of the *dérive* and situlogy? Jorn obviously conceives it as a popular version of the Galton Board, as its ludic application, as a machine on which one re-encounters the principle underlying the Galton Board (which, according to one commentator, is "essentially pinball without the fun").[11]

The proposed equivalence should, however, not obscure the fact that there are differences between the two devices, such as the verticality of the Galton Board and its great number of beads, making it rather reminiscent of the Japanese pachinko.[12] Moreover, the ludic aspect is certainly not inherent to the Galton Board; here the detachment of

1 See Jacqueline de Jong and Hans Brinkman, letter March 6 1973 (this volume, 261).
2 See Hans Brinkman, "Playing Pinball Is Delightfullllllllll!" (this volume, 264).
3 Today, in the era of Google Maps and other attempts of mapping all kinds of institutions and objects, the situation is of course a different one.
4 Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive," 1956, trans. Ken Knabb, Situationist International Online, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html. Originally published in *Les Lèvres nues*, no. 9 (November 1956).
5 Image caption in *Internationale situationniste*, no. 1 (June 1958): 22 (this volume, 327).
6 Image caption in *Internationale situationniste*, no. 7 (April 1962): 55.
7 Asger Jorn, "Open Creation and Its Enemies," 1960, trans. Fabian Tompsett, *Situationist International Online*, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/open4.html. Originally published as "La création ouverte et ses ennemis," *Internationale situationniste*, no. 5 (1960): 29–50. See also this volume, 50–53.
8 Jorn, "Open Creation."
9 Jorn, "La création ouverte," 45.
10 In French, the word "tilt" was actually sometimes used as a synonym for pinball machine.
11 McKenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International* (London: Verso, 2011), 69.

the observer is the precondition of the validity of the experiment. The experimental setup is borrowed by Jorn as a model for situlogy by forcing it into the contingency of the ludic. The reverse applies to the pinball machine: its use value is primarily and evidently gaming. However, it is conditioned by technical factors in a way that reflects the concept of the *dérive*: bumpers and targets on the machine's playfield give an unpredictable "spin" to the ball. Jorn's brief description highlights a different element of the pinball machine—the "tilt," which causes the flipper arms to suddenly lock, so that the player can no longer keep the ball on the sloped playfield and its roaming comes to a very abrupt end. The activation of the tilt function results from an infringement by the player: an unfair intervention by nudging and shaking the pinball machine too vigorously.

While the loss of control becomes evident in the tilt *ex negativo*, the pinball arms are instruments of control. In a Dutch television program from 1970, De Jong speaks about the pinball machine in these terms: "I find it fascinating that a little ball can do things in a specific space that you yourself do not control, or only partly control. And that you yourself can change it again. That you stand opposite a machine.... [A] machine you're engaging with, that thing does something itself."[13] De Jong celebrates this mode of interaction, which is exactly what distinguishes the pinball machine from the Galton Board. Due to the conflict between mechanical autonomy and the player's ability to control, the act of playing pinball demonstrates the previously mentioned duality inherent to the *dérive* and to situlogy. However, pinball also challenges and unbalances these conceptions. What we encounter here is a paradoxical constellation: on the one hand, controlling by means of flipper arms contributes to keeping the ball in its meandering movement; on the other, the desire to control can lead to game over (tilt).

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In the history of the pinball machine, the conflict between the ludic and control consistently coincides with another topos: war, or, more precisely, aerial warfare. Just at the time when De Jong and Brinkman were planning their pinball map of Amsterdam, an entire landscape was transformed into a pinball machine in Vietnam. A 1971 article of the American *Armed Forces Journal* quotes the following words of an air force officer participating in the Vietnam war: "We wire the Ho Chi Minh Trail like a drugstore pinball machine and we plug it in every night."[14] The background for this pinball metaphor was the military operation Igloo White, during which airplanes dropped electronic seismo-acoustic sensors to improve and extend control over the hidden trail used by North Vietnamese guerilla troops for replenishment. The sensors were able to register sounds and signal them to low-flying bombers. The military historian John Prados supports the association of pinball with this venture, stating that the sensor system functioned "exactly like a pinball machine" and "the mavens of the electronic battlefield became pinball wizards"[15]—an allusion to one of the most prominent references to the pinball machine ever made in popular culture: Tommy, the deaf, dumb, and blind pinball genius of the eponymous concept album by the Who. It appears that not only the United States Army was able to make a pinball machine out of the Vietnamese war zone. Concerning the Tet Offensive, a concerted surprise coup launched by the Vietnamese communists in 1968, American general Frederick C. Weyand said his electronic situation map looked like "a pinball machine, one light after another going on as it was hit."[16] Here pinball serves as an image not of ludic control but of the complete loss of control. These metaphors highlight the similarity between the overview of the battlefield provided by the map or the view from the air and the playfield as seen from above by the pinball player. The ball plays a subordinate role within this discourse; it is rather the rapid flashes, the dazzling light, and hectic blinking of the gaming machine that carry the metaphorical meaning.

While Ulrike Ottinger's folded triptych *Dieu de Guerre* (1967–68) combines the design and aesthetics of a pinball machine with motives like missile heads and firearms,[17] and while Claude Simon describes the flickering images of airplanes and an aircraft carrier on the backglass of a pinball machine in his novel *Histoire* (1967),[18] the Italian situationist Gianni-Emilio Simonetti in 1970 established a firm link between the Vietnam War and the pinball machine. The term "Vietnamization"—proclaimed by Richard Nixon to promote the United States Army's gradual withdrawal from the conflict—is associated by Simonetti with the pinball machines shipped from the US to postwar Europe. The diaphanies—the illumination patterns of the pinball machine's backglass—are like:

12 Roland Barthes deals with the differences between pinball and pachinko; see Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs* (New York: Noonday, 1989), 27–29. On the critique of ideology regarding pachinko in relation to Fordism, see Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit der Menschenwelt*, in *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen*, vol. 2, Über die Zerstörung des Lebens im Zeitalter der dritten industriellen Revolution (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1980), 58–78.

13 Lies Westenburg and Hans Redeker, "Jacqueline and the Situationists," VPRO, 1970. Transcribed by Peter Westenberg and translated by Patrick Lennon.

14 George Weiss, "Battle for Control of Ho Chi Minh Trail," *Armed Forces Journal*, February 15, 1971, 17. In Allen Ginsberg's unpublished "Vietnam War / 1972 Election Note & Copybook," he also refers to Operation Igloo White and this pinball metaphor. See Alex Houen, *Powers of Possibility: Experimental American Writing Since the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 54.

15 John Prados, *The Blood Road* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1998), 268.

16 Frederick C. Weyand, quoted in James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A Concise History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 37.

17 Ulrike Ottinger, *Dieu de Guerre*, 1967–68, acrylic paint on wood, 180 x 240 cm.

18 "Le voyant [of a pinball machine] représentait le pont d'un porte-avions voguant sur une mer bleu électrique des petites lumières s'allumant brillant dans la pénombre"; "[i]l y avait plusieurs avions ou plutôt sans doute le même avion représenté dans les positions les phases différentes de l'attaque d'abord minuscule presque un point très haut dans l'échancrure entre deux nuages puis un peu plus bas son dessin se précisant"; the pinball players "poussèrent tous de grands cris donnant des tapes dans le dos de celui qui jouait et se mirent à secouer frénétiquement la machine Une des deux géantes en maillot de bain coiffées d'un béret de marin américain qui encadraient le pont du porte-avions s'était aussi allumée cyclamen électrique." Claude Simon, *Histoire* (Paris: Les éditions de Minuit, 1967), 285–87.

> evidence of other coarser vietnamizations when the international gendarmery is made with blows of now-the-allies-call-us-brothers-they-send-us-from-amerika-the-pea-soup-of-our-mothers, with the necessary etceteras. Let us remember them, though not all, and by families: Bally, Chicago Coin, Gottlieb, Keeney, Midway, Williams . . . napalm and cybernetics are stories of this morning; the organization of the Fifties is still electric. (this volume, 331)

What is articulated here in a grotesque frenzy is an anti-American resentment and the critique of a cultural imperialism continuing the war by other means, not least by pinball machines (a similar thesis regarding the same machine was supported by Pier Paolo Pasolini).[19] Simonetti's reference to Vietnamization brings up another association. The references to cybernetics (an organization technology claiming the extensive controllability of complex processes) and napalm (an incendiary device fired from airplanes in Vietnam) point to instances where action is taken *from above* (be it in an abstract or concretely spatial sense), based on the promise of total overview and exact accuracy (of striking). Nixon's plan with the Vietnamization policy was to keep American ground troops out of combat operations, while helicopters, jets, and bombers were supposed to continue supporting the South Vietnamese units from the air. A similar hubris announces itself already in the title of Simonetti's text —"Dedalus Pingames." By means of this mythical reference, two figures of passage through space are designated: not only—as would be more obvious in the context of the pinball machine—Daedalus as the constructor of the labyrinth in which the Minotaur is imprisoned, but also Daedalus as the constructor of wings for himself and Icarus, leading to the latter's fatal plummet. Without being made explicit, the relation of Icarus's flight to the pinball machine is insinuated by referring to "gravity [as] metaphor of [the] inevitability of the conditio [humana?]." (this volume, 331) Despite all efforts, Icarus will eventually fall and disappear just like the ball of the pinball machine always does. The layout of the first sentences of Simonetti's text reflects the likeness of both tools: the text has two columns (on the left side the Italian version, on the right the English translation) and the paragraphs on the first page are shaped so that they resemble a pair of wings as well as flipper arms (fig. 1).

Simonetti's wild speculations about the pinball machine, war, and control echo Guy Debord's *Critique de la séparation* (1961).[20] Two image motifs recur in the film's found footage: war scenes and shots of big cities, particularly Paris. The dominating perspective on the city is the bird's-eye view; boulevards, crossroads, squares, and rivers are seen from above. Interrupted by images of military missiles, the footage of the metropolis does not, in a clearly emphatic way, evoke associations to the *dérive*. Instead, the montage produces images of control and imminent destruction. Between scenes containing military and urban motifs, recordings of a pinball machine playfield repeatedly occur. Unlike in Jean Herman's film *Actua Tilt* (1960), which was produced around the same time,[21] and in which the footage of a Parisian amusement arcade, as well as close-ups of

DEDALUS PINGAMES

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pinball and other gaming machines, merge with images of crashing warplanes and scuttled ships into a dystopian diptych of mass culture and militarism, the pinball machine in *Critique de la séparation* oscillates between control and emancipation. In Debord's film, a voice-over comments while the pinball machine images are shown:

> The events that occur in our individual existence as it is now organized, the events that really concern us and require our participation, generally merit nothing more than our indifference as distant and bored spectators. In contrast, the situations presented in artistic works are often attractive, situations that would merit our active participation. This is a paradox to reverse, to put back on its feet.[22]

The pinball machine cannot easily be allocated to one of the two positions mentioned by Debord. The seemingly infinite rolling and bouncing of the ball may, on the one hand, be an image that illustrates the concept of the *dérive*; on the other hand, it suggests the deprivation of the possibility to participate: the pinball player remains offscreen, and the playfield is transformed to a screen that can only be looked at. The pinball machine in *Critique de la séparation* is a dialectical machine indicating that the terms of social participation can switch completely.[23]

19 See Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The City's True Face," in *Stories from the City of God: Sketches and Chronicles of Rome, 1950–1966*, ed. Walter Siti (New York: Handsel Books, 2003), 166.

20 *Critique de la séparation*, directed by Guy Debord, 1961, 35 mm, b/w, 18 mins.

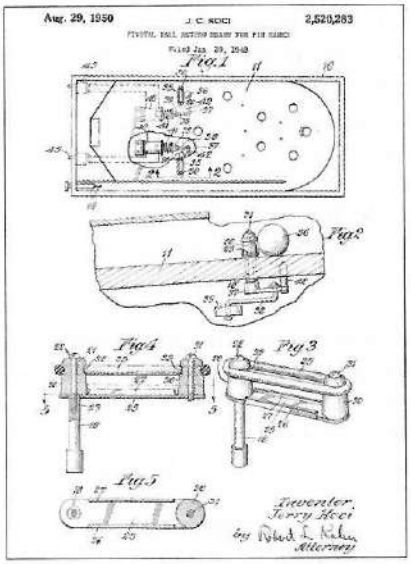
21 *Actua Tilt*, directed by Jean Herman (Jean Vautrin), 1960, 35 mm, b/w, 11 mins.

22 Translated by Ken Knabb in Guy Debord, *Complete Cinematic Works: Scripts, Stills, Documents*, ed. Ken Knabb (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003).

23 In his reading of *Critique de la séparation*, Thomas Y. Levin also deals with the pinball machine in dialectical terms and argues that the player, on the one hand, was subjected to the precepts of late capitalism, while, on the other, was able to achieve an understanding of its regulations and one's own "pseudo-engagement" within the same percepts. Thomas Y. Levin, "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord," in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*, ed. Tom McDonough (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 371.

The audiovisual associations of the pinball machine with war images—or more specifically, with images of warplanes—in works created in the early 1960s like *Critique de la séparation* and *Actua Tilt* seem like waking dreams of an utterly material conjunction: in the early 1940s, New York's mayor, Fiorello La Guardia (after which one of the city's airports is named), extended an already existing ban on slot machines to pinball machines, which were, consequently, confiscated during raids and partly dumped in the Hudson River. Some of the reasons brought forward for the ban on pinball were illegal bets, their being linked to the mafia, as well as pedagogic reservations about school kids presumedly wasting their lunch money on gaming.[24] Another argument was that, considering the entry of the US into the World War II, the production of pinball machines meant a waste of metals urgently needed for war purposes. In the beginning of 1941, the *New York Times* published an article with the slightly ironic title "Pinball Machines to Help Win War," reporting that the remains of the confiscated pinball machines were examined to extract components of copper, nickel, steel, and aluminum; the metals were given to the Salvage for Victory campaign, which was designed to ask the population for help collecting material suitable for war purposes.[25] Supposedly, more than 10,000 tons of material was obtained from pinball machines and used for the production of bombs.

But this was not the only reason behind the American military's interest in pinball machines. After pinball had been banned in an increasing number of American cities and states, the Engineering Division of the Equipment Laboratory of the Air Corps in Dayton, Ohio sent a request in 1942 to numerous police stations across the country: "It has come to the attention of the Material Center that a great many transformers, relays, and rectifiers are available in the police departments of larger cities, having been taken from confiscated pin-ball machines. The Material Center is very much in need of equipment of this type."[26] Originally, materials obtained from pinball machines were supposed to be used in the production of military aircrafts, but due to their deficient quality, this was not viable.[27] Nevertheless, pinball materials continued to be needed, as is made clear in an official letter from 1943: "The Engineering Division of the Material Center is designing various types of ground training equipment which utilizes the units found in the pin ball machines."[28] According to a 1943 report in *Billboard* magazine, carrying the headline "Pinball Goes to War," the Army Air Forces Training Command was interested in purchasing components of pinball machines for the production of flight-training devices used by prospective pilots.[29] These so-called fixed gunnery deflection trainers, measuring more than four meters, had a control stick and a shooting device on one side and, opposite, a screen displaying projections of planes simulating enemy targets. With the shooting device, flashes could be "fired," and each time a target was hit, it was signaled by a photoelectric bell.[30] Even though the phenomenal resemblance with pinball machines might have been rather low, the press was enthusiastic about this appropriation of gaming machines:



2

> They've taken the juke machines, razzle-dazzle pinball gadgets into which millions of good American nickels were poured before the war, made them respectable with a new coat of paint and a few ingenious changes and sent them off to war. It's hard to believe that these machines could fit any place in the war effort. But they are doing a mighty important job.[31]

Media theorist Friedrich Kittler's thesis that "the entertainment industry is, in any conceivable sense of the word, an abuse of army equipment" is turned upside down by this *détournement* of the pinball machine.[32] Elsewhere, Kittler has proposed the use of pinball machines as a training device: "I've always liked playing pinball. It's a way of acquiring quicker reflexes. . . . that's perhaps . . . why you have to train on pinball and other machines, in a technological advanced society or culture."[33] Maybe there is a connection

24 On the ban on pinball machines in New York City, see Daniel Reynolds, "The Pinball Problem," in *Refractory*, no. 17 (July 2010): refractory.unimelb.edu.au/2010/07/18the-pinball-problem-daniel-reynolds.

25 "Pinball Machines to Help Win War," *New York Times*, February 2, 1941.

26 Col. G. V. Holloman, A.C., Chief, Equipment Laboratory, Engineering Division, official letter to various American police stations, December 23, 1942. National Archives, 412.43 – Electrical Equipment from Pinball Machines 1942-43-44.

27 Some manufacturers of pinball machines were directly involved in the production of military equipment. They stopped production of gaming machines during World War II to instead manufacture armor-piercing shells. See Doris Kearns Goodwin, *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 316.

28 Col. G. V. Holloman, A.C., Chief, Equipment Laboratory, Engineering Division, official letter to various American police stations, February 25, 1943. National Archives, 412.43 – Electrical Equipment from Pinball Machines 1942-43-44.

29 "Pinball Goes to War," *Billboard*, March 27, 1943.

30 For a more detailed description of the flight-simulation devices, see "How Air Corps Train Gunners," *Billboard*, October 21, 1944, and "Juke Box Plays a Martial Role," *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, September 17, 1944.

31 "How Air Corps Train Gunners."

32 Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 96–97.

between pinball machines as instruments that serve the optimization of human reaction and the training devices of the US Air Force built by using components of pinball machines. In fact, it was not until after the war, in 1947, that flipper arms—which are moved by pressing or hitting two buttons on the left and right side of the machine with one's fingers or palms—were for the first time installed in electromechanical form.[34] In 1950, flipper arms were recorded as "Pivotal Ball Return Means for Pin Games" under US patent #2,520,283 (fig. 2). The purpose of the patented technology, invented by Jerry Koci, was "to draw out to a greater degree the skill of a player," "control of the ball," even "controlling the playing of the game."[35] The obstacles on the playfield and the player using their mere hands to shake the pinball machine were no longer the main factors that defined the course of the ball and prevented it from falling down the drain too quickly. From that point forward, the flipper devices counteracted the gravitational force.

The same struggle for control and against gravity is thematized by the first commercialized pinball machine with electromechanical arms: Humpty Dumpty, manufactured by Gottlieb, refers to the ball-shaped character in a famous English nursery rhyme (its origin being attributed to a cannon in one interpretation): "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall / Humpty Dumpty had a great fall / All the king's horses and all the king's men / Couldn't put Humpty together again." Not even a royal army can prevent the "falling sickness," the tumble and the smash; control and the ball itself ultimately slip away.

"How did the flipper come into being?" This is the first question in a questionnaire sent by De Jong and Brinkman to potential authors for the pinball issue of *The Situationist Times* (this volume, 262). By this they may have referred to the historic origin of the pinball machine, in the early 1930s. The word "flipper" (which lends its name to the pinball machine as a whole in Europe), however, suggests that in searching for an answer to this question, one should instead focus on the game made possible with the introduction of flipper arms—a risky gamble, playing with control and the loss of it.

33 Friedrich A. Kittler, "Technologies of Writing," interview by Matthew Griffin and Susanne Herrmann, in "Literature, Media, and the Law," special issue, *New Literary History* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 739.

34 Before 1947, numerous pinball machines were equipped with flipper arms, but they did not function electromechanically. See Richard M. Bueschel, *Encyclopedia of Pinball*, vol. 1, *Whiffle to Rocket, 1930–1933* (LaGrangeville, NY: Silverball Amusements, 1996), 62.

35 United States Patent Office, #2,520,283: "Pivotal Ball Return Means for Pin Games," patented August 29, 1950.

İZ ÖZTAT

KEEP THE BALL IN THE GAME

To take a break from my dictator for a few days, I surrender to a game that was mapped out for me by Jacqueline and Hans in the early 1970s. The duo kept a notebook of places in Amsterdam with pinball machines while working on the unrealized seventh issue of *The Situationist Times* (this volume, 266–67). Upon seeing the little orange notebook in the hands of a colleague working on the history and archive of the magazine, I find the perfect distraction. After locating the addresses on a map, I go around the city asking for pinball machines where they could be found once.

I start from the closest address to my hotel, Café Doppelgänger, which has been replaced by Coffeeshop Basjoe. I walk in and ask for something mild and receive my Morning Blossom. Upon learning where I am from, the guy at the counter greets me with "*As-salāmu ʿalaykum*." There are two ways to interpret this phrase: as a salute to a Muslim, or, taking it literally, "Peace be upon you." I choose the latter because I need it desperately. Jamal is from Morocco. I reply, "*Waʿalaykumu as-salām*." I ask him if there is a pinball machine in the coffee shop. "Not around here," he replies.

As I get high staring at a screen showing images of wildlife, I console myself: it is not my naiveté that sends me around looking for something absent; on the contrary, I do it because I am well versed in doing so. Jamal approaches me and points to an address on his phone where pinball machines can be found nowadays.

I bid him farewell and walk toward the next stop on my itinerary. Morning Blossom had its impact, and it is already too late to make a rule against indulging in what the marked locations might offer instead of pinball. I notice half-buried bollards protruding from the sidewalk. Photographing them, I am one of the tourists walking around in an altered state of consciousness.

I arrive at the location of the café Moulin Rouge to find Bones Hotel (DRINK EAT SLEEP). Inquiring about the pinball machine, I receive a short, annoyed answer: "Not here." I walk two streets down and stroll along the canal. Café Pleinzicht is at the corner, still with the same name. I sit at the bar and wait for the waitress to finish her conversation. After ordering my coffee, I ask her name, which feels like a breach of privacy. I tell Hadewig about my mission and learn that the café has been there since 1941. She has been around for twenty years and the pinball machine was gone before she arrived. She speaks proudly of the owners, treats the regulars with care, and is patient with the tourists. I get permission to take pictures. Scanning the walls, I notice a photograph of three tattooed arms on top of each other, all engraved with the bollards I noticed earlier.

As I walk in and out the marked locations along Zeedijk Street, all I hear is: "Not that I know of" . . . "Not anymore" . . . "A what machine?" . . . "No, no" ... "I really don't know" . . . "Forty-four years ago!" . . . "I was not even born at that time."

I need a break and sit by the canal for a little while. Scrolling down my Twitter feed, I learn that the Turkish government has launched Operation Olive Branch to invade Afrin, one of the self-governing regions of the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria. Arrests of those who criticize the operation on social media are already underway. In a state of exception, my dictator rules as he desires.

The next marked location is a sex shop. No pinball machine. Browsing the products, I am taken by a rubber ball gag. While I'm not a fan of mass-produced toys, I still have an urge to buy it. I will soon start working full-time and will have money to spare. How does one know the right size? Usually capable of faking it till I make it, in this case I flounder. Let's go with the 44 mm. Maybe an object is what serves as a link between subjects, allowing us to live in a society, to be together.

I walk into another century at Café Old Nickel, full of handcrafted details: wooden furniture, cast brass sailor paraphernalia, and Delft tiles. What is embedded persists. The old man at the bar shakes his head and tells me no when I ask about the pinball machine. I sit next to the cat and take a close look at the tiles of children's games rendered in blue on off-white. One is of a hoop-rolling game. Two boys are frozen forever as they push their circles, one by hand, the other with a stick.

Café l'Espérance is now a butcher shop. According to the notes of Jacqueline and Hans, it used to have a machine called Space Time with a "bad" tilt. I don't know if that is a good thing or not. I abstain from walking in here, but I can't resist the urge to enter Dungeon Tattoo, which was Café Ali Baba back then. Inside is a tiny dog and Jelena, a Serbian dyke with a keen interest in bondage as far as I can decode. Upon hearing my pinball question she lets out a big laugh and says, "Long gone, baby!" I immediately like her for meeting my desire to be confronted with the truth, but lightly. I show her the bollard tattoos that I photographed and ask if she has the design. She opens a folder to find four different versions. I choose one and ask her to tattoo it on my neck, where I cannot let anyone get close. I want it to start on my collarbone, for I take the most pleasure when the needle moves against the bone. I ask her not to use anesthetic spray. Jelena is exceptional in responding to impulses and desires. I let her know my gratitude.

The pain combined with the crowd on Nieuwebrugsteeg overwhelms me. I give up going into all the marked locations, instead just taking photos of the souvenir shop, the fashion brand storefront, the sandwich joint, the cosmetics shop, and the multinational telecommunications

retailer. My last stop on this street reads Istanbul Café. I walk in and ask about the pinball machine in Turkish, which alienates me from my task. They just rented the place and don't even know what was there last. The place is decorated with a photomural of the Bosphorus at night. The owner offers me tea and I excuse myself, saying I have to complete the survey before the end of the day. I don't want him in my story.

After visiting thirty-one out of the forty-four marked locations, I change the rules so that I can find at least one pinball machine. I head toward the address that Jamal gave me in the morning. On the way, I see Circus Zanzara and can't resist the temptation to peek in. An old witch approaches and curses me: "Your rivers will be taken for snakes!" I bounce away, slip into TonTon Club, and ask about the pinball machines. They have four upstairs. I purchase my tokens and coffee and rush upstairs.

I put some coins in the jukebox and then play several games of pinball, as if I'd never played before, letting every tilt upset me. I am consciously enjoying myself. This is Geneviéve speaking in Michèle Bernstein's novel *All The King's Horses*. I've never played pinball, never even been near a machine. The only association I have is an idiom derived from the game that is still in use today. "Tilt" is the word used for "pinball" in Turkish, and "*tilt olmak*" (to be tilted) means to be irritated or to go mad.

I sit across from the four pinball machines: Attack from Mars, The Getaway, Ghostbusters, and Game of Thrones, which hosts a player. The red lights on the backglass read:

> I SHALL WEAR NO CROWNS AND WIN NO GLORY
> I SHALL TAKE NO WIFE
> HOLD NO LANDS
> FATHER NO CHILDREN

Sounds good to me. When the player is done, I approach him, explaining that I don't know anything about the game and want to learn. Can he tell me about pinball and his relationship to it? Jon shares his wisdom. That machine is fifteen to twenty years old. This one over here is thirty years old. He has been playing since he was seven. Every machine has its own character and its own field. The only thing all the games have in common is that there are five balls per game. There are holes inside. There are small flippers to manipulate the ball. First tip: don't lose the ball, try to keep it in the game as long as possible. If you lose your ball five times, you're finished. Just shooting is fun, but you have to build up the game—advance your weapons, get more power. You know the story of *Game of Thrones*? A lot of families killing each other. And House Stark, they are the good ones. There are missions you have to complete for the family you are fighting for. But the story is not relevant to your skills. Yes, the story is not relevant to my skills. Thank you, Jon!

My colleagues just completed filming Jacqueline going through each issue of *The Situationist Times* with commentary. They invite me to Jacqueline's house to meet her for the first time. Up until now, she has been a mythical presence that I constructed from two or three things I know about her. Jacqueline made her disobedient work throughout a lifetime. She is playful even when defiant. She rejects actions that are completely absolutist (absolutist, absolutist, absolutist). She doesn't distinguish between lover and tutor. I shall stop here. It is not my task to situate her in the canon.

As we celebrate with champagne, I tell her about my game of trying to locate the pinball machines she mapped back when she was my age. I thank her with a necklace I made by casting the veins of a dried cactus, and she gives me one of her potatoes that she harvests, dries, and turns into jewelry. Her cats allow me to touch them to ease my anxiety.

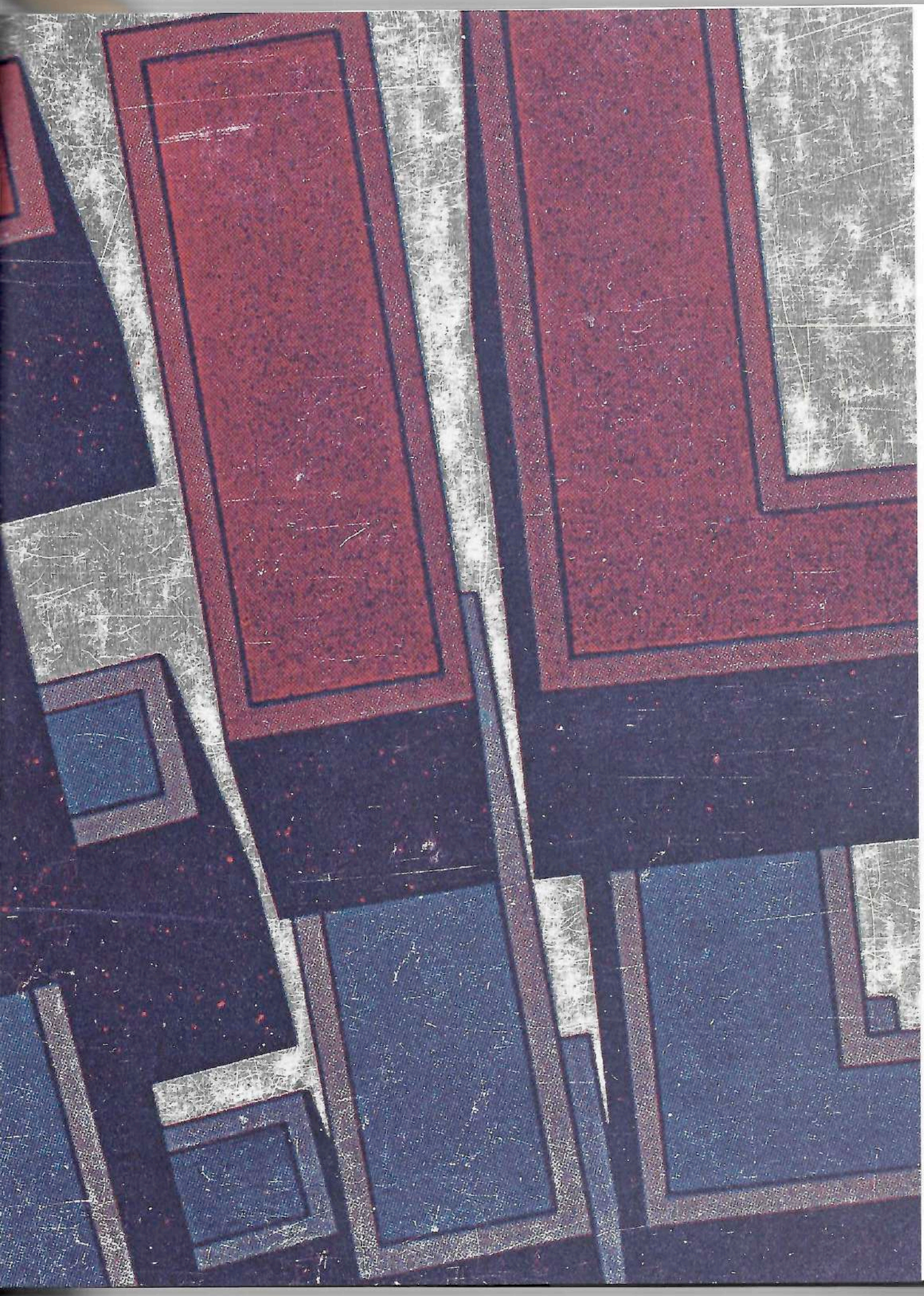
During dinner, at a drunken point of conversation, I ask Jacqueline, "What do you think about seduction?" She roars, "I love seduction! I think seduction is one of the nicest games." Then she insists on knowing why I asked. I become a child-woman and stutter without answering. "To complete my story," I should have said. One of my colleagues suggests that seduction equals manipulation. The other one asks, "Don't all forms of communication involve a level of manipulation?"

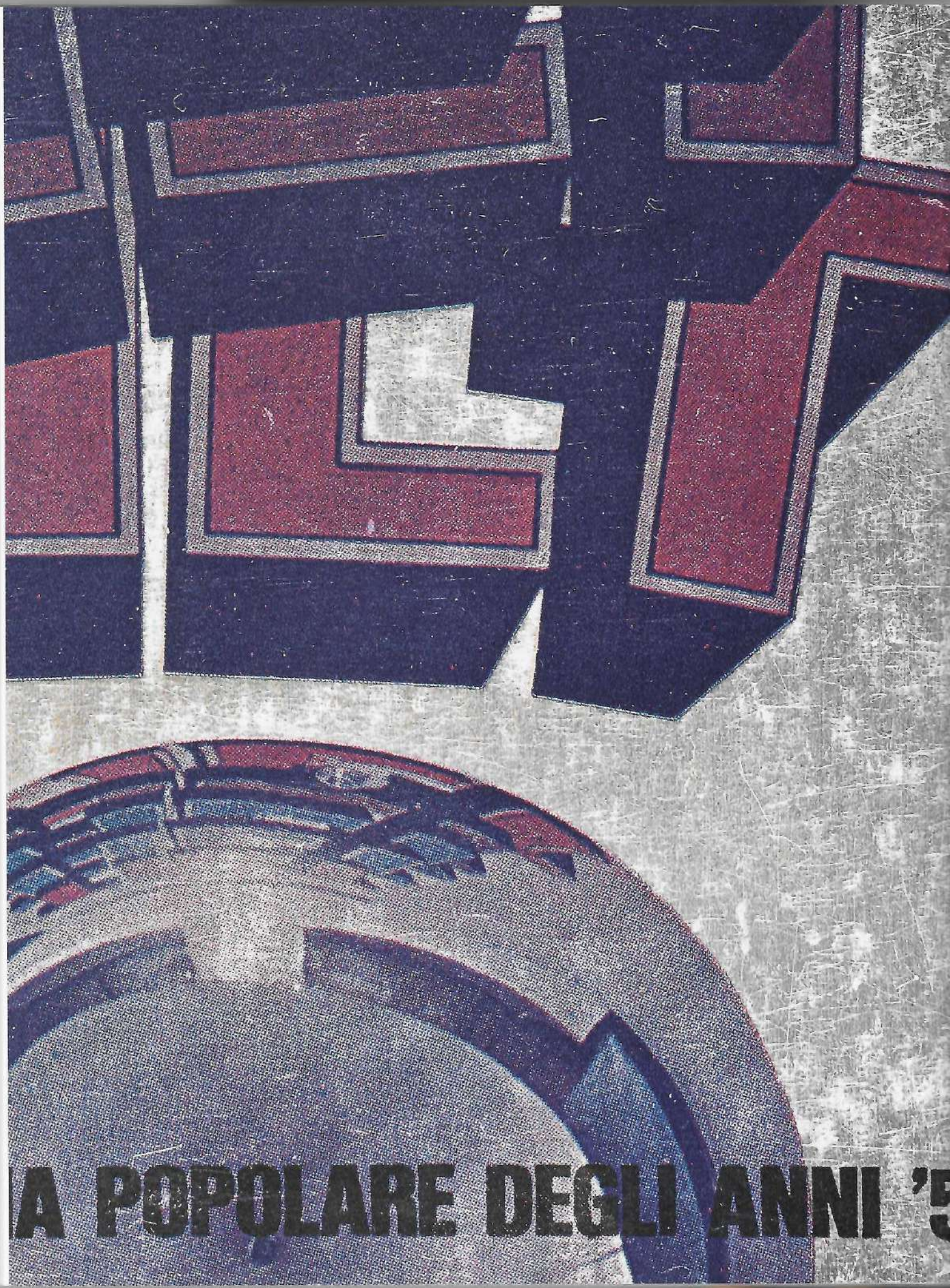
Jacqueline gets in a taxi and my colleagues turn to walk away. I suggest that we wait until the taxi departs before we go. "Some women look back when they are leaving," I say. Jaqueline looks at us from behind the glass and waves goodbye.

As I try to find my way back to my hotel, Amsterdam becomes a circular labyrinth. I roll around like an aimless ball. I finally find my hole in the attic, fall asleep to the sensations of my freshly tattooed skin. I dream of a porcupine with erectile spikes, enclosing its hands between its feet. It must be a carnivore, I think, for it has blood on its mouth. I wipe away the oozing red with a nipple and tuck the porcupine into the hollow of my neck. I leave and don't look back.

PINBALL SITUATIONS: A DOSSIER

EDITED BY
DENNIS GÖTTEL AND ELLEF PRESTSÆTER




A POPOLARE DEGLI ANNI '5

DENNIS GÖTTEL AND ELLEF PRESTSÆTER

INTRODUCTION

"How is the pinball situation in China?" This question, posed by Jacqueline de Jong in a 1972 letter to the artist Walasse Ting (this volume, 289), indicates the global scope and boundless curiosity of the magazine project De Jong was pursuing at the time with her partner, Hans Brinkman. As they put it in a letter to prospective contributors to the planned Pinball Issue of *The Situationist Times*, "Actually anything on the subject is of great use to us." (this volume, 261) It is thus a pity that they didn't stumble upon some of the remarkable pinball situations that were developing closer to home. Around the time De Jong and Brinkman began work on the pinball issue in Amsterdam, comparable publishing projects were underway elsewhere in Europe. In Cologne, the young art critic Benjamin H. D. Buchloh was planning an ambitious anthology of writings on the culture of pinball, and in Milan, a joint pinball publication and exhibition was in progress. Of these three projects devoted to the culture of pinball, only the latter materialized. The exhibition *Tilt: Vetrofanie per una archeologia popolare degli anni '50*, held at the Galleria Bréton, also produced a catalog of the same name. In addition to numerous reproductions of backglass artwork—the "glass appearances" (*vetrofanie*) referenced in the title—the publication features Gianni-Emilio Simonetti's singular "Dedalus Pingames," as well as other writings with an impressive range of perspectives: a review of a pinball machine by a connoisseur, a scholarly essay, a countercultural think piece, and a list of pinball machines available on the US market.

The book envisioned by Buchloh would have been more comprehensive. For instance, it would have included the first German translation of a chapter from Roland Barthes's book *L'empire des signes* (1970) dealing with Japanese pachinko. Buchloh's book never came to be, but texts related to it appeared elsewhere. While his own "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp" was published pseudonymously in *Zeit-Magazin*, Michael Oppitz's semiological analysis of the pinball machine *Shangri-la*, entitled "Shangri-la, le panneau de marque d'un flipper. Analyse sémiologique d'un mythe visuel," appeared in the French anthropological journal *L'Homme* in 1974, amply illustrated with photographs by Candida Höfer and others. Similarly, Friedrich Wolfram Heubach would publish his seminal essay on pinball in his own magazine *Interfunktionen*, and Bernd Jürgen Warneken later went on to contribute his treatise on the subject, in the critical tradition of the Frankfurt School, to the Suhrkamp Verlag anthology *Segmente der Unterhaltungsindustrie*. The publishing vehicles these texts ended up in—from the mainstream weekly magazine, via the conceptual art journal, to the scholarly review and anthology—were thus remarkably diverse.

With the exception of Paolo Virno's retrospective essay from 1991, the texts included in this dossier date from what the Italian philosopher refers to as "the age of pinball." The short pieces by Friedrich Kittler, himself an avid player, were only published posthumously. The texts by Heubach, Kittler, Warneken, and Virno appear for the first time in English in these pages.

In the 1960 novel *Cain's Book*, Alexander Trocchi remarks that artists and intellectuals used to play pinball with "feelings of guilt." There is little sign of such feelings in the writings gathered here. From Paris via Cologne to Milan and through the Black Forest, the dossier documents the extent to which the pinball machine (to borrow a formulation from Barthes) is an object capable of engendering "certain situations" in experience, theory, art, and politics. This is arguably true even for the one text—that of Asger Jorn—that does not refer explicitly to the game of pinball.

Roland Barthes
—Adamov and Language

"Adamov et le langage" was first published in *Lettres nouvelles* (May 1955) and subsequently included in *Mythologies* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1957). "Adamov and Language" from MYTHOLOGIES by Roland Barthes. Copyright © 1957 by Editions du Seuil. Translation of prefaces and Part I: Mythologies copyright © 2012 by Richard Howard. Reprinted by permission of Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux. UK & Commonwealth: From *Mythologies* by Roland Barthes. Published by Vintage. Reprinted by permission of The Random House Group.

As we have just seen, our Poujadist common sense consists in establishing a simple equivalence between what is seen and what is. When an appearance is decidedly too peculiar, this same common sense still has a means of reducing that excess without relinquishing the mechanism of equalities. This means is symbolism. Each time that something seen appears unmotivated, common sense orders up the heavy cavalry of the symbol, admitted to the petit bourgeois heaven insofar as, despite its abstract tendency, it unites the visible and the invisible in the form of a quantitative equality (this is *worth* that): calculation is saved, and the world still abides.

Artur Adamov having written a play about pinball machines, an unwonted object in our bourgeois theater, which in the matter of stage properties knows little more than the adulterous bed, our popular press has hastily spirited away the unaccustomed object by reducing it to a symbol. As soon as it *meant something* it was less dangerous. And the more apparently the criticism of *Ping-Pong* was addressed to a mass audience (*Match, France-Soir*), the more it has insisted on that play's symbolic character: be reassured, it's only a symbol, the pinball machine simply *signifies* "the complexity of the social system." This strange stage property is thereby exorcised since it means something—since it is *worth* something.

Now the pinball machine in *Ping-Pong* symbolizes nothing at all; it does not express, it produces; it is a literal object whose function is to engender, by its very objectivity, certain situations. But once again our criticism is misled, in its thirst for depth: these situations are not psychological, they are essentially *language situations*. Here is a dramatic reality which we must admit, ultimately, alongside the old arsenal of plots, actions, characters, conflicts, and other elements of the classic theater. *Ping-Pong* is a masterfully mounted network of language situations.

What is a language situation? A configuration of words likely to engender what *at first glance* seem to be psychological relations, not so much false as frozen in the compromise of a previous language. And it is this paralysis which, finally, annihilates psychology. To parody the language of a class or of a character is still to keep a certain distance, to lay claim to a certain *authenticity* (that virtue beloved of psychology). But if this borrowed language is in general use, always situated below caricature and covering the play's entire surface with a variable pressure but without any fissure through which some cry, some invented speech might emerge, then human relations, despite their apparent dynamism, are as though vitrified, ceaselessly deflected by a kind of verbal refraction, and the problem of their "authenticity" vanishes like a lovely (and false) dream.

Ping-Pong is entirely constituted by a block of this language under glass, analogous, if you like, to those frozen vegetables which permit the British to enjoy in their winter the acidities of spring; this language, entirely woven out of tiny commonplaces, partial truisms, scarcely discernible stereotypes hurled with all the force of hope—or of despair—like the particles of a Brownian movement, this language is not, to tell the truth, a canned language, as was, for example, the concierge's jargon reconstituted by Henri Monnier; it is rather a delayed-action language, fatally formed in the characters' social life and thawing, real yet a little too acid or virid, in a later situation where its slight glaciation, a touch of vulgar, *learned* emphasis, produces incalculable effects. *Ping-Pong*'s characters are a little like Michelet's Robespierre: *they think everything they say!* A profound observation which underlines man's tragic plasticity with regard to his language, especially when—final and astounding aspect of the misunderstanding—that language is not even quite his.

This will perhaps account for *Ping-Pong*'s apparent ambiguity: on one hand, a mockery of language is obvious, and on the other, this mockery is continually creative, producing perfectly living beings endowed with a density of time which can even conduct them through an entire existence to death. This means precisely that in Adamov the language situations altogether resist both symbol and caricature: it is life which is parasitical to language, that is what *Ping-Pong* declares.

Hence Adamov's pinball machine is not a key—it is not D'Annunzio's dead lark or the door of one of Maeterlinck's palaces; it is an object which generates language; like a catalytic element, it constantly affords the actors a fragment of speech, makes them exist in the proliferation of language. *Ping-Pong*'s clichés, moreover, do not all have the same density of memory, the same relief; that depends on who says them: Sutter the faker, who makes up fine speeches, displays certain caricatural acquisitions, parades a parodic language which produces laughter at once ("Words, they're all traps"). The paralysis of Annette's language is slighter, and also more pathetic ("Someone else's turn, Mr. Roger").

Each character in *Ping-Pong* seems thereby doomed to his verbal rut, but each rut is dug differently, and these differences of pressure create precisely what in the theater is called situations, i.e., possibilities and choices. Insofar as *Ping-Pong*'s language is altogether acquired, having come from the theater of life, i.e., from a life itself given as theater, *Ping-Pong* is theater of the second degree. It is the very contrary of naturalism, which always proposes to amplify the insignificant; here, on the contrary, the spectacular aspect of life, of language, *sets* onstage (as we say that ice *sets*). This mode of congelation is the very mode of all mythic speech: like *Ping-Pong*'s language, myth itself is a speech frozen by its own doubling. But since we are concerned with theater, the reference of this second language is different: the mythic language plunges into Society, into a general History, while the language Adamov has experimentally constituted can double only a first individual language, for all its banality.

In all our theatrical literature I see only one of whom it can be said, to some extent, that he too has constructed his theater in a free proliferation of language situations: this is Marivaux. Conversely, the theater most opposed to this dramaturgy of language situations is, paradoxically, a verbal theater: Giradoux, for instance, whose language is sincere, i.e., plunges into Giradoux himself. Adamov's language has its roots in the air, and everyone knows that in the theater whatever is exterior flourishes.

(Translated from the French by Richard Howard.)

Asger Jorn
—The Situationists and Automation

"Les situationnistes et l'automation" was published in *Internationale Situationniste*, no 1 (June 1958): 22–24. The English translation by Peter Shield was first published in Asger Jorn, *Concerning Form: An Outline For a Methodology of the Arts* (Silkeborg: Museum Jorn, 2012). Reprinted with permission from the translator.

It is quite astonishing that until now very few people have dared to pursue the idea of automation to its ultimate consequences. As a result, there are no real perspectives on it. It seems instead as if the engineers, scientists and sociologists are attempting to foist it on society.

Yet automation is now central to the problem of the socialist domination of production and the pre-eminence of leisure over working time. Thus the question of automation is heavily charged with positive and negative possibilities.

The goal of socialism is abundance, the greatest number of goods to the greatest number of people, and this implies the reduction of unexpected occurrences to a statistically improbable level. An increase in the number of goods reduces the individual value. This devaluation of all human goods to a virtually perfect neutral level will be the inevitable result of a purely scientific development of socialism. It is regrettable that most intellectuals cannot think beyond this idea of mechanical reproduction and are thus preparing for the adaptation of the human race to this bleak and uniform future. Artists who specialize in the search for the unique are also turning with hostility in increasing numbers against socialism. In return, socialist politicians are suspicious of all manifestations of artistic power or originality.

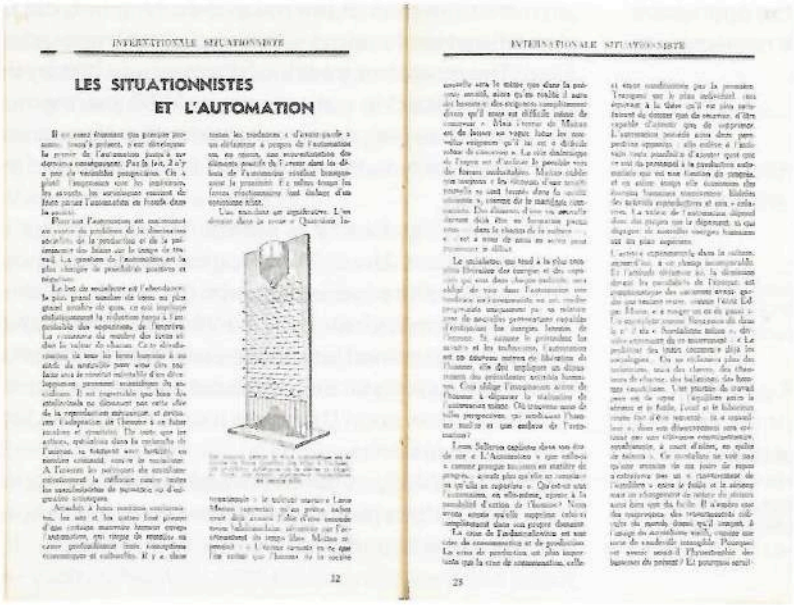
Attached to their conformist positions, both sides are demonstrating a certain dislike of automation which seriously calls their economic and cultural conceptions into question. In all "avant-garde" tendencies, there is a defeatism about automation or, at best, an under-estimation of the positive aspects of the future, the proximity of which is revealed by the onset of automation. At the same time, reactionary forces are flaunting an idiotic optimism.

Here an anecdote is appropriate. The militant Livio Maitan reported last year in the periodical *Quatrième Internationale* that an Italian priest had already advanced the idea of a second weekly mass, made necessary by the increase of free time. Maitan responded that, "The error here consists in assessing that a person in the new society will be the same as in present society, when in reality it will be difficult even to conceive what his completely different needs and demands will be." But Maitan's error is to leave to a vague future the new demands that for him are too "difficult even to conceive." The mind's dialectical role is to incline the possible towards desired forms. Maitan forgets that it is still the case that "*within the old society* the elements of a new one have been created," as the *Communist Manifesto* says. The elements of a new life should already be forming among us, in the field of culture, and it is up to us to use them to ignite debate.

Socialism, which tends towards the most complete liberation of the energies and abilities of each individual, will be obliged to see in automation an anti-progressive tendency, only rendered progressive through its relation to the new provocations capable of exteriorizing latent human energies. If, as the scientists and the technicians claim, automation is a new means of liberating the human race, this should imply a transcendence of previous human activities. This obliges the active human imagination to outshine the very realization of automation. Where will we find the perspectives that will make the human race the master and not the slave of automation?

In his study "Automation," Louis Salleron explains that it, "as nearly always in matters of progress, . . . *adds* more than it *replaces* or *suppresses*." What is it that automatism in itself adds to the possibility of human action? We have learned that within its own domain it suppresses everything.

The crisis of industrialization is a crisis of consumption and production. The crisis of production is more important than the crisis of consumption, the latter being conditioned by the former. Transposed to the individual level, this is equivalent to the thesis that it is better to give than to receive, to be capable of *adding* rather than of *suppressing*. Automation thus possesses two opposed perspectives, depriving the individual of any possibility of adding anything personal to the automated production, which is a *fixation* of progress, while at the same time conserving the human energies freed from repetitive and non-creative activities. The value of automation



INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE

LES SITUATIONNISTES
ET L'AUTOMATION

INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE

"This device allows for the automatic generation of a Gaussian curve (position of the balls at the bottom). The artistic problems of the dérive occur at the same level as the relatively unpredictable path of each ball."

thus depends upon the projects which surpass it and release new human energies on a higher level.

Experimental activity in culture today is an incomparable field. A defeatist attitude here, an abdication before the possibilities of the times, is symptomatic of the old avant-gardes, who remain content with, as Edgar Morin puts it, "gnawing away at a bone of the past." A surrealist called Benayoun writes in the second issue of *Le surréalisme même,* that movement's latest expression, that "the problem of leisure is already plaguing the sociologists . . . . No longer is it technicians who are in demand, but clowns, crooners, ballerinas, contortionists. One day of work for six of rest: the balance between the serious and the frivolous, the leisurely and the painstaking, is in great danger of being upset . . . . The 'worker' in his idleness will be turned into a moron by a distorting and invasive television, short of ideas, in search of talent." This surrealist cannot see that a week of six rest days does not bring about an "upset balance" between the frivolous and the serious, but *a transformation of the nature* of the serious as well as the frivolous. He is only hoping for corrected misunderstandings, absurd reversions to the given world, which he conceives in the image of the old surrealism as some kind of intangible vaudeville. Why will this future be the hypertrophy of the low points of the present? And why will it be "short of ideas"? Does this mean it will be short of the surrealist ideas of 1924 updated in 1936? This is probable. Or does it mean that the imitators of surrealism are short of ideas? That we well know.

The new leisure seems like an abyss that current society can only think of filling with a multiplicity of pseudo-games derisorily thrown together from bits and pieces. But at the same time this could be the basis for the building of the most imposing cultural construction ever imagined. This goal is obviously outside the circle of interest of the proponents of automation. If we wish to debate with the engineers, we will have to move into their field of interest. Maldonado, the current director of the High School of Design in Ulm, explains that the development of automation is compromised because there is hardly any enthusiasm among the young about following the polytechnic route, apart from the specialists in the ends of automation themselves, who lack a general cultural perspective. However, Maldonado, who ought to be demonstrating this general perspective, is completely unaware of it. *Automation will only be able develop rapidly from the moment it has established as a goal a perspective contrary to that of its own establishment and we know how to realize such a general perspective as we go along, in step with its development.*

Maldonado proposes just the opposite: establishing automation first and then its usage. One could discuss this method if the goal were not precisely automation, because automation is not an action in a domain which then provokes an anti-action. It is the neutralization of a domain that would neutralize contiguous fields as well if counteracting actions were not undertaken at the same time.

Pierre Drouin writes in *Le Monde* of 5th January 1957 of the extension of hobbies as a realization of the potentials which the workers are unable to find while employed in their professional activities, and concludes that in every man, "there is a slumbering creator." This banal old cliché could be a highly topical truth today, if we could reattach it to the real material possibilities of our time. The slumbering creator has to wake up and his awakened state could well be called situationist.

The idea of standardization is an effort to reduce and simplify the greatest number of human needs in the most equitable way. It is up to us whether or not this standardization opens up domains of experience more interesting than those it closes. According to the result we can either end with a total degradation of human life, or with the possibility of perpetually discovering new desires. However, these new

desires will not appear of their own accord in the oppressive constraints of our world. Communal action is necessary to detect them, manifest them and realize them.

(Translated from the French by Peter Shield.)

Alexander Trocchi
—Cain's Book (excerpt)

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[. . .] In early life sensations like metaphysical burglars burst forcibly in(to) the living. In early life things strike with the magic of their existence. The creative moment comes out of the past with some of that magic unimpaired; involvement in it is impossible for an attitude of compromise. Nevertheless it is not the power to abstract that is invalid, but the unquestioning acceptance of conventional abstractions which stand in the way of raw memory, of the existential . . . all such barriers to the gradual refinement of the central nervous system.

It is not a question simply of allowing the volcano to erupt. A burnt backside is not going to help anyone. And the ovens of Auschwitz are scarcely cold. When the spirit of play dies there is only murder.

Play. Homo ludens.

Playing pinball for example in a café called le Grap d'Or.

—In the pinball machine an absolute and peculiar order reigns. No scepticism is possible for the man who by a series of sharp and slight dunts tries to control the machine. It became for me a ritual act, symbolizing a cosmic event. Man is serious at play. Tension, elation, frivolity, ecstasy, confirming the supra-logical nature of the human situation. Apart from jazz—probably the most vigorous and yea-saying protest of homo ludens in the modern world—the pinball seemed to me to be America's greatest contribution to culture; it rang with contemporaneity. It symbolized the rigid structural "soul" that threatened to crystallize in history, reducing man to historicity, the great mechanic monolith imposed by mass mind; it symbolized it and reduced it to nothing. The slick electric shiftings of the pinball machine, the electronic brain, the symbolical transposition of the modern Fact into the realm of play. (The distinction between the French and American attitude towards the "tilt" ["teelt"]; in America, and England, I have been upbraided for trying to beat the mechanism by skilful tilting; in Paris, that is the whole point.)

Man is forgetting how to play. Yes, we have taught the mass that work is sacred, hard work. Now that the man of the mass is coming into his own he threatens to reimpose the belief we imposed on him. The men of no tradition "dropped into history through a trapdoor" in a short space of 150 years were never taught to play, were never told that their work was "sacred" only in the sense that it enabled their masters to play.

The beauty of cricket. The vulgarity of professionalism. The anthropological treason of those who treat culture "seriously", who think in terms of educating the mass instead of teaching man how to play. The callow, learned jackanapes who trail round art exhibitions looking for they know not what in another's bright turd. How soon Dada was mummified by its inclusion in the histories.

Many of the poets and painters in Paris in the early Fifties played pinball; few, unfortunately, without feelings of guilt. [. . .]

Friedrich Kittler
—"Pinball Machine" and "Nerves"

"Flipper" and "Nerven" were posthumously published in *Baggersee: Frühe Schriften aus dem Nachlass* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), ed. Tania Hron and Sandrina Khaled, 58–59, 117. Translated for this volume with permission from Wilhelm Fink Verlag and the editors.

Pinball Machine

If man is only in the fullest sense a human being when he plays, he is no longer human when he plays with a machine.[1] The invention of the pinball machine required advanced electronics. It embodies speed per se, both to the detriment and the benefit of the player (the latter because the electronic magnet of the pinball machine does not distinguish forceful from gentle touches of the button). Games that train reactive speed have been around since the nineteenth century, such as table tennis, for example. But in the case of table tennis, your opponent was human. The pinball machine has a player fight a ball propelled by electric and mechanical contraptions. That is to say, unlike with the opponent at table tennis, who wants you to lose, the ball brings about your loss in an automatic and wholly indifferent way. The ball will never be in play forever, and the player is granted no more than a deferral of his defeat. It is only because the player trains his reactive speed to adapt slavishly to the machine, that he achieves, no so much a victory but, rather, a deferred defeat, which the machine then records on its point counter as a win. Automaton non nisi parendo quoddammodo vincitur.[2] That is the kind of obeisance the pinball machine and its power enforces. It is the same power that conditions people to avoid cars, to survive the shocks of urban living, and to postpone the unpredictable debacle time and again, even if only for seconds. When playing chess or checkers, players at least learned the art of intrigue against their opponent, and playing

Go even taught the virtue of patience. The pinball machine, by contrast, only allows for tactics, but not strategy—that is how forgetful the machine is (unless you play one of those quasi-bourgeois pinballs that honor your score by multiplying your bonus points. Those, however, are increasingly being replaced by machines that are forgetful in the manner of roulette, rather than having a memory).

That the pinball machine is a training device rather than a game is evident in the fact that every round has to be paid for and that winning merely allows you to continue your training. Not coincidentally, arcades set up pinball machines next to electronic guns aiming at paper dummies. Newer pinballs even have built-in mobile targets that derive from such shooting galleries.

Excepting occasional multi-player competitions, pinball machines are made for single players. The construction of the pinball machines makes that possible, much in contrast to the majority of other games that require at least two players—such as foosball, pool, table tennis, card and board games. That moves the pinball machine into the vicinity of solitaire, whose polar opposite is rushed activity. The player plays because the pinball machine is the only partner he has in this world; technology substitutes for lost contacts. More precisely though, the replaced contact really isn't one: what the pinball machine trains, as already said, is the individual's confrontation with the apparatus of technological horror. But while any real confrontation allows for the possibility of survival at best, the pinball offers the player at least the possibility of a symbolic victory (not by beating the invincible machine, but by beating his own inability, which is expressed in low scores of games already played). The regulars playing pinball are mostly young people who want to escape social convention or are denied any chance of rehabilitation, or older men whose physiognomy testifies to their failure.

Nerves

Those who sink into their beds after an evening of playing pinball without a single bonus game, feel—without being able to determine whether they are falling victim to hallucinations or experiencing the most real of the real, that which is always passed over—how nervous flashes trace random figures over distant points of their faces, as if blind enervations wanted to inscribe the graphs of a zigzagging pinball onto the player's skin, as in Kafka's *In the Penal Colony*. This is a literal engram of the false state of being awake and, at the same time, in diminutive form, a game that ushers immediately into sleep.

(Translated from the German by Michael Wutz.)

1 Translator's note: The first half of the first sentence in German derives almost verbatim from Friedrich von Schiller, "Denn, um es endlich auf einmal herauszusagen, der Mensch spielt nur, wo er in voller Bedeutung des Worts Mensch ist, und er ist nur da ganz Mensch, wo er spielt." *Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen* (2. Teil, Kapitel 16, 15. Brief, 1795).

2 Editors' note (in German original): The machine can be controlled only by submitting oneself to it. See Francis Bacon, "Natura enim non nisi parendo vincitur" (*Selected Writings of Francis Bacon*, ed. H. G. Dick, trans. J. Spedding et al. New York: Modern Library, 1955, 462): "Nature to be commanded must be obeyed."

Friedrich Wolfram Heubach —Essay on the Pinball Machine

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I Playing Pinball, methodically speaking

Don't ask for the reality that needs this object "pinball machine,"—and don't believe that reality is what its objects are. Instead,
inquire about the reality which the pinball machine naturalizes—have a look at how an object figures a world.

So don't ask for the role the pinball machine plays in reality, but inquire about the reality this machine turns into a playful game—thus contributing to its perpetuation.
:
THE PINBALL MACHINE STAGES REALITY

II Playing Pinball, describing it

A game sequence:
something appears—willingly . . . bumps against something and is propelled away—sometimes a light goes on or off . . . rolls down the playfield and works its way up again . . . reaches an impasse and finds an outlet . . . triggers a bumper and veers off . . . scores a target and passes . . . and disappears—unwillingly.

It goes without saying that, prior to all this, something was inserted into a slot in order to recognize that the ball becomes a representation, or embodiment, of human existence.

This representation contains others that make it into a world of its own in the first place.

a) The inclined plane of the playfield:
The disappearance of the ball is objective, life is finite—the inclined plane serves as a popular image of eschatology. The inclined plane, which bourgeois thinking understands as the accidental veering off from the straight-and-narrow that can only be overcome by means of one's virtue—and which is counterbalanced by a romantic notion of death—transforms into a resigned and heroically-cynical principle of existence.

b) The pinball machine is a closed box:
The ball rolls objectively, things are taking their course. The world which you inhabit is sealed and has an internal objectivity that cannot be tampered with. If you want to change the course of things—say, by nudging the ball—you'll be penalized: tilt. Only the two flippers can ensure an optimal flow of the ball—an immanent skill.

c) The pinball machine has two levels:
The glamor and the burlesque of the playfield, and the playful levity of its forces, are the shiny surface hiding the somber calculus of an electronic netherworld.—Life, wheels within wheels and unfathomable: there are things beyond our reach but, for all of that, it makes sense somehow.
—So be it—or—just for fun—.

d) The pinball machine is balanced:
(A technical explanation: its electronic interior, which is sometimes visible, houses a pendulum, whose loose end vibrates within a metal ring. If the apparatus is nudged too violently, the pendulum hits the ring and triggers a short circuit: tilt. Skilled players bypass that trigger moment by nudging the machine—once they've redirected the ball—in the opposite direction, thereby counterbalancing the original nudge.)
The pinball machine follows laws whose self-serving utilization has a limit. You can't overdo things in life, it has a measure. The danger lies in the extremes, while staying on course is the golden mean—those who go astray will be excluded and don't count anymore: tilt. The pendulum is fate, you cannot tempt it too hard. —It is the dialectic of an immanent and self-regulating negation that corrects itself (nudge and counter-nudge).

e) The pinball machine does not result in a win:
The game contains itself and runs its course; what matters is the length of the game. To act is not to produce but to reproduce. Activity does not yield a product that would transcend it, but only a sign of its efficiency: scores. It exhausts itself in its performance.

To sum it up:
The pinball machine naturalizes a reality, whose conditions are objective and irrevocable, in which everything runs its course, and which—in view of its momentary instability (the inclined plane)—has no room for sentimental timelessness and teleologies. Instead, everything boils down to reaction speed, maneuvers, and strategy (skill). The skillful and measured balancing of contradictions is the sweet spot, and when they cancel one another out, that amounts to exclusion: tilt. Questions of philosophy are no longer relevant; being productive means being efficient: to perform.

III Playing pinball, from an almost scientific perspective, or, how wishes turn into signs.

playing pinball	intentional:	real:	nominalized:
before:	to wish	to pay	need
during:	to act	to be allowed to	performance
after:	to have	scores	signs

That is how wishes transform into scores, needs into signs. For a better understanding, I would recommend consulting key texts on alienation.

IV Playing pinball, from a popular perspective

a) When playing pinball really "reveals" what I have observed, its popularity may be surprising. But no, it makes a difference whether you play or read a myth. Here we are interpreting that myth, and understanding it as being representative; playing it, by contrast, means taking it literally.
b) The crucial moment when the cynicism inherent in the reality of the pinball machine cancels itself out occurs because the machine *allows* for that cancellation to happen. It resides in the machine itself. By proposing itself as the graspable and mythically-loaded sign of that reality (see section V), it moves imperceptibly toward its ungraspable meaning. That is the old compensatory trick of all games: to be able to want to do what, beyond all games, is a matter of mere ability. From that point of view, all games are forms of initiation. That is true of the pinball machine as well.
c) Another crucial moment: the pinball machine offers the repeatability of a singular experience in its signs.
d) And another one: the pinball machine makes it possible to overcome ego-bruising by staging it in game form ("Mediatization of Mediatization by means of Aestheticization").

What is understood when we speak of the singular and experiential in the context of a pinball machine: things running their course, the order of things, life.

V Playing Pinball, mythologically speaking (not explicated)

The pinball machine no doubt owes most to the old mythical image of the sphere of life (see I, description) in all its various perspectives (nemesis, vanitas, etc.). Building on the eschatology of the inclined plane, the pinball deserves the utmost credit for having fused that image with the image of Sisyphus rolling his boulder. Beginning with that image, the documented meanings of labor that don't result in a product—such as performance, absurd and cynical heroism, and the peculiar void of history—come into focus.
But the other functional moments of the pinball machine owe something to myth as well: the pendulum, the playfield above and below, of what is moved and what is moving, and its box as a world cabinet.
It is this concentration of mythical elements in the pinball machine, and the moments already mentioned, that likely accounts for its specific popularity.

VI Playing Pinball, politically speaking[1]

What is missing is a dialectical political analysis of the pinball machine: the reality inherent in the machine certainly produces illusions, but these may change into expectations. Its reality certainly produces forms of fatalism, but these might lead to the freedom of insurgent uprisings. It certainly produces determinations to maintain the status quo, but those could change into affirmations of strategies, etc. Whether and to what degree that turns out to be the case can only be determined through empirical, psychological investigation. Notwithstanding the surrogate function of the pinball machine, its euphoric acceptance among the Left during its anti-authoritarian phase suggests something to that effect—perhaps not explicitly, but certainly by way of capillary mental diffusion.

Regarding the principle of this dialectical function performed (but not only) by the pinball machine:
Each release of repression—no matter how partial and cryptic—changes something in its primary condition: its totality, its "nature." The resultant instability may, in the topography of the repressed, be reabsorbed at other sites through recessions, but something has changed.—Almost nothing if you see it only from the point of view of its concrete function, but more when taking into consideration the entire principle: the lesion of a false totality whose promise of a reconstruction of identity is finite.

VII Playing pinball, personally speaking
I used to be good at it.

(Translated from the German by Michael Wutz.)

1 Leaving aside occidental medical councils and professional youths, who are not worth mentioning, I know of no other more impertinent stupidities than those of the armchair Marxists and effeminate adepts of Pestalozzi on the Left, who—in the delirium of their wannabe-humanitarian and preservative pedagogy and while clinging to their sanitized souls—are once more lifting their admonitory finger to declare the pinball machine a danger and a late-capitalist domestication strategy. Who should be impressed by that? Who can understand capitalism in such a metaphysically evil way and be blind to the wit with which it integrates the lure of repressions integral to it in such a systematic way. This form of cultural critique oscillates between biblical rigor and leftist asceticism and, beyond tolerance, misconstrues Marxism as a free-for-all that grants their inanities some reprieve.

Gianni-Emilio Simonetti
—Dedalus Pingames

"Dedalus Pingames" was published in Italian and English in *Tilt: Vetrofanie per una archeologia popolare degli anni '50* (Milano: Galleria Bréton, 1970). The text has been slightly revised in accordance with the Italian version. Published with permission from the author.

Olympia! Olympia! Yew reely 'ad me diddled, yew sed yew woz cumin' an'on'y piddled!

Who knows more than Olympia, with her talk of spilli pins, booms, going steady and of this tilt, coitus interruptus of an Electric Onan? Liebig trading stamps of the age of integrated circuits, *cannabis sativa* of the high-Volta—alexandrine, naturally!—vitreophanies are like evidence of other coarser vietnamizations when the international gendarmerie is made with blows of now-the-allies-call-us-brothers-they-send-us-from-amerika-the-pea-soup-of-our-mothers, with the necessary etceteras. Let us remember them, though not all, and by families: Bally, Chicago Coin, Gottlieb, Keeney, Midway, Williams . . . napalm and cybernetics are stories of this morning; the organization of the 'Fifties is still electric; it sells elementary models, rewards spirit of initiative with a marble and a game, deludes and alludes to some probable vertical mobility along

the societal staves, proposes in fact *goals* which cybernetics no longer tolerates, which refuses to consider the light of the new electronical immaculate conception. These are the years of the *self-service* which turns everyone on to the unlimited possibilities which it opens up to the daily theft and kleptomania. This way common sense overcomes the inherently ridiculous probability and becomes its own spectacle.

The cybernetic training relies upon the most religious evidence: gravity, metaphor of that inevitability of the conditio other times rehearsed as status. After all we are all vietnamized, including "Grand Hotel" which never manages to light any bulb behind its italiotic iconography good at the best for a kama sutra (but the holy city—we know—never returns the ball!). At Song Mi the liberators of the New Frontier declare themselves with the balls (hot) from the mouth of the gun of the Genocide, Lieutenant Calley: From cenogenetic dichotomy through diagnostic conciliance to dynastic continuity, or if you prefer—maw maw, luk, your beeftay's fizzin over! If he's a chemist then he'll write on the envelope of the litmus: "Un RobINet Orlginal Révolutionnaire qui s'arrete de couler quand on ne l'écoute pas" and like Plotino: the eye that sees, so as to see, must have seen. When is it that one becomes aware of the passage from Virgin to Bride? In *Great Glass* the big Duchamp, the master of vitreophanies, underlines that the principal subjects are two: the fall of water and illuminating gas. The bride's "drop of water" falls towards the bottom, while the gas rises from the bachelors' waiting room to the nuptial bed. The sabbath of the ideology is when the Broyeuse-de-Chocolat, which modifies the nervous reactions of the bachelors, from a steam engine becomes a logical machine—as it seems from an apocryphal quotation from the green-box—that is to say from erotic mechanism the chocolate grinder mutes into electric brain, becomes frigid , alludes to the rules and to the **organization**.

The orgasm disappears, the naked bride cloud-shaped—or **nue**—can no longer be impregnated, the "promised one" of steam becomes a cybernetic relation for the bachelors Bally, Chicago Coin, Gottlieb, Keeney, Midway, Williams, who strip off the old male uniforms, otherwise defined as punch tools, and with them the least trace of sexuality. The three pistons of air-draughts jump the window and become calembour, metabolic electroshock, they photograph nothing more, the tulle veil gives place to the silica plate. Turning

the question mark upside down *we discover what makes* a *Virgin of the Bride*: **vietnamization.** At first she's consentient, accepts the strip, then draws herself back, being only a ready virgin—a *ready maid.* Rightly enough the **organization** offers local remedies: to the "T'um-ennuies" it answers with ever more nervous electrified circuits. When a laager becomes a theater, the electrification no longer draws any geometry, it hides itself, becomes spectacle, lights up itself with orange blossoms like a good mcluhanian bride. Before this bride all suitors are equal; possibilities of demonstrating through luxury one's social status collapse, on the luminous plane, information impresses upon every conception the electrical illusion of greatness; as we see, the image is moreover *pointe,* weighing the profit and loss of encounter with this small surrealistic Alice the first inklings arise: emancipation of interest is in direct contrast to the totalitarian equality enforced. What saves the *Hell's Angels* from looking like attachés in a viennese operetta is the theft of small coins from the bride's belly; it follows—objectively—that if we concede the *pingames* to feel their physical constitution as a consequence of a castration, then they perceive, in their neurosis, the truth.

The flaw in this iconography is not so much the romantic illusion it hankers after, but more the fact of not being reconcilable with any of the probable *landEscape.* As the **organization** foresees, every perception collides with the hasty *phony war* of gravity, of obstacles, of *gates,* and of electrified passages. The universal rule of the game which the bride tries to guarantee is that there exists an equity between that which is paid and the exact determination of the coercive exigency. So she is also a bit of a whore! Other truths matter to the **organization** for example that of opposing their **Sense of Proportion** (also in the Hegelistic sense), to the proletarian **Common Sense** of the unaware bachelor squeezed between the imaginary model of *mass-culture* and the ghost of the product of his "work" as a *gadget,* or as a distress psychosis, that is as *tilt.* Initiation, Education and Government are synonyms (cit.). Appearances often conceal their origins insofar as the mechanical dimension of work appears as economical work—it is not by chance that ergonomics is a science for corporals—the *electric job* eliminates these irksome contretemps, it much more resembles a brain and its bioelectric reactions, it separates itself from yesterday with a racist glance, cue or pocket billiards and *Flippers* are on different sides of the barricade, their "economy" is constructed on distinct psychological bases with diverse differential units and autonomies. The bride is only apparently familiar, her consistency comes down from the **organization** which first of all dissects the production into its simpler processes and synthesizes them in combinations, it predisposes the logical apparatus—over five hundred combinations in ten years in second-generation pinball machines— it assigns the tasks. The passage from the banality of the mechanical fact to the complexity of the electrical *play* accompanies the birth of **morality;** the purpose of the bride is that of furnishing a fully *gratifying* occupation. As they say in the *Central Intelligence Agency* when the mechanics of the chocolate grinder becomes an integral part of life, the proletariat-player becomes an artist. An artist in the sense that he is consentient to the "medium" and finds in it new electro-celebral circuits and therefore new possibilities of expression. Paying for his genius with concreteness he takes off on the tangent of the *lines* and is centrifuged away, inferring that the bride appreciates the bachelors' company, but is not averse to incest.

Power, Politics and People. In the end pingames have a merit still denied to democracy: to transform electricity, not only into property but also into culture, and, as with Olympia, this transformation takes place only at the moment of the game's **consummation** sabotaging the quality and the In-and-Out classification stumbled upon by the necrophilia of some *partisan review.* Summing up, between *masscult* and *midcult* the bride chooses *proletcult,* that is the **loisir;** it is true, at times we shed a tear, but the reasons are diametrical to those of the illiterate Ortega y Gasset who first makes a mistake in writing **kulture** and then he accopulates himself on dreams of "renHASHance anOlogies." Much slyer is Whitman—agent in Havana for the **organization**—who spits on Culture and then "conceives" political projects good for the stage of an elizabethan theatre. The bride's morality—in the meantime—is an attitude which becomes form, she willingly lets us spy her, *kills* the time which separates the **Popular Arts** from *low culture.* In her better moments she even manages to shock.

They say that *midcult* lives on the still warm remains of the last avant-garde round, and instead the bride returns to Caesar that which belongs to him and pays tenths for battles never undergone in the defense of his borders (see the amerikan-pop-art); as Olympia often remembers, *the french revolutionary bourgeoisie was born on a tennis-court and not at the Sorbonne.* The character of the **organization** now appears clear: it is the continuation of the power of economics, its capacity to re-create for its own purposes the directed structure which it requires as an image. It builds up bureaucracy and thus finds its metaphysical reason. Its great invention, says Lenin, is to make one see that "the technical questions of organization reveal themselves as social questions." The pingames, objectively, do not conquer Islam! The minute information is, in this way, returned tricked in accordance with the memorized conditioning projects; in Gottlieb's 2 players *Hawaiian Isle* "the diagonal pins drive the ball directly to the flippers and to the targets of coloured rotating discs"; in the **organization's** machines the identification of the electric ends with the moral ends hides itself behind the classification by efficiency. Here the level is still in the order of decimal numeration; the great systems, not always "equipped with re-launch springs and their well-known passage action from one hole to another" renounce defining themselves at "everybody's reach" to accede to *The Big Scale,* to the cybernetic baptism, and to its table where the astonished alienation meets the utopia of perfect power, namely the place of indifferent good and evil that is to say the **total bureaucracy.** "All that which I tell you, writes Lewis Carroll, is that it is rectangular-shaped—half a yard longer than wide—and that an electrified path, one yard wide, starts at a corner, and entirely borders its perimeter. And does it close itself again? Asked Hugh. It does not close itself again. Just as it's about to close itself, it takes a corner, and starts once more to encircle the garden, and then it goes round itself again, and so on, until it uses up all the available space. That's right, like a snake with cornered edges, comments Lambert."

The bride besides, is sensitive to the *snake with cornered edges* so much so as to become its beloved "image." If the bride's desire has suffered the pains of hell to get to the bachelor's desire—do not forget the conditioning importance of the score which sums up and rewards—nonetheless he is still more tormented by his narcissism, that which Duchamp calls the mirror, the reflected target to which you shoot and which **glitters from illuminating gas**. As in the "Great Glass" vases and capillaries fundamentally have the function of, here exactly, the gates, compulsory passages, holes and pins, that of channeling the G.I. and in both cases it goes towards *castration,* specially in the communicating vases in which the dense liquid identifies the "male." Merchandise, Mass, Movement. Every "merchandise," at this point, is —differently from the seed—carrier of death, it succumbs to gravity, yearns for their destruction. Even the traditional bourgeois theater, apparently so far, performs in reality the spectacle of movement and its violence, becoming an accomplice of other people's merchandising nature. The second comma of the canonical article on marriage decides for us: its secondary end (or second end?, suggests Olympia) is the remedium concupiscentiae, which is to say that, all considered , the satisfaction that can be given by the abundance of merchandise resides, at times, in practice.

This mechanical eulogy of the bride's spectacle, which we here suspend in the measure of the generalized communication which it traces, brings us back to the spectacular critique of pinballs. Around 1913 Duchamp asks himself: may we make things that are not works of art? He finds the affirmative answer in electricity and in the metaphorical use of its pulsating breadth. This is the year of *frequency paintings* which preludes to the "regime of coincidences," just like the *Domino-Gottlieb.* The active principles of the *Great Glass* and of Pinball Machines are: **The Push**—for the flaps and the compulsory passages, **Ability**—for the holes and electrified gates, the **Weight**—for the embroidery at centre-field. The movements of the player and those of the bride are so conceived as to be governed on the basis of *archimede*'s principle. The area of five plus four shots and one tilt which with some ability could be reduced to only one hole, demultiplicates the target, compels to a work of "darning" in that zone of the bride called centre-field or lower belly, forces to an ability which clashes against the reasons of the objective determinism of desires taken as reality. The marble in the hole, ultima spes, thus comes to collide with the sieves of the male molds and with all the lower side charged with electric tensions. Still more, the desire expressed by Duchamp in 1914 to make a fortunate and unfortunate painting is not accomplished for him by chance, but by the "electric pavlovism" of the bride's territory. Origin of the ghost limb according to the italian school of medicine. In the route from its birthplace, namely from this cinematic matrix which preludes to the bioelectric ballet, and which prints "Illuminating Gas" and the comet of lit-up mushrooms produced in death, at the height of the venus mount just under the flaps, the ball bachelor not only loses his male character, but also his state and his physical prowess. The bridegroom's fertility, like in all romantic stories, is destined to be wasted: not by chance the fellows in livery—even on the great glass—are headless, freudianly castrated . . . in other words, don't you call all this vietnamization?

Bernd Jürgen Warneken —The Pinball Machine. An Essay on the Culture of Diversion (excerpt)

"Der Flipperautomat. Ein Versuch über Zerstreuungskultur" was published in *Segmente der Unterhaltungsindustrie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974), 66–129. Copyright © Suhrkamp Verlag: Frankfurt am Main, 1974. Translated for this volume with permission from the author and Suhrkamp Verlag.

Usage Analysis I: Repercussions of the Profit Motive for the Experience of Playing

Reduction

[. . .]

The general signs of pinball entertainment are not only that the means of entertainment are becoming technologized, or that entertainment is reproducible on a technical level, but that the elements of automatization are at the very center of the entertainment themselves. What is crucial is that the user is not reduced—unlike in the case of older machines of entertainment—to being a passive observer of a moving image, or to a listener, as with a mechanical music box. Such machines, that is to say, do not communicate any symbols—even if they were symbols of total automation. At the same time, the player cannot manipulate the game to suit his own purposes. Rather, he becomes part and parcel of a partially automated process that allows him to operate the machine in the same measure that it allows the service vendor to exercise control over the duration of the game.

This process has become normed: an essentially innocent quality resides at the base of every serial and machine-made commodity, which in turn is the precondition for cheap mass production. What is, however, problematic is the nature of the norming. The norming has had the effect of construing an apparatus that should meet all possible needs, including the most rudimentary and fleeting ones. As a reduction machine eliciting desires, it must be able to communicate to each player—all at once and without prior practice—the purpose of the game and allow him to play it. At the same time, as a—largely—supplemental offer, the machine targets the loose change of, especially, students and wage earners: "Better a fast nickel than a slow dime," as the phrase goes.[1] What you get out of the machine with every coin is correspondingly meager. After everything is said and done, the pinball, like the majority of today's slot machines,[2] only allows for short, simplified and repetitive forms of activity and experience. That does, of course, not mean that the machine is without entertainment value. It is, on the contrary, sufficiently attractive to serve as entertainment for millions. How can that be explained?

Illusion

"Packaging," as they say in the parlance of advertisers, "is no less important . . . than the product itself."[3] In the case of the pinball, it is the large, non-functional display case behind the playfield, and the blinking, illuminated artwork—covering as it does each square centimeter of the surface without taking up any play space—that transform the machine.[4] The makeup does not communicate what the pinball machine gives, but what the public could project onto it. Most pinball machines take the idea of the United States as a paradise of leisure as their subject. Furthermore, almost a third of all models until about 1965 are gendered as female.[5] Players, however, are also face to face with heroes of the Wild West, artists, ice hockey players, and talking youths. If other, older machines transported players into exotic locales—thus paralleling the diversions of fairs or adventure films—today's machines feature decorations of utopia in local space. Materially sparse, the pinball machine is converted into an "object of meaning," while the player, executing the simplest of manual motions, is meant to feel like being in Las Vegas[6]—a desired destination that is little less than utopia itself. A double delusion, the aesthetic of the pinball machine appeals unreservedly to social illusions, and it is not the evidence of its potentially stupefying effect, but rather evidence of the inefficacy of this appeal, that could lead to refrain from it.

This aesthetic promise is concretely embodied in the "pinup girls" that are painted casually and in simplistic shapes on the display board of the machines—poor imitations of the surrogate-like movie stars and proxies for the hostesses of exclusive establishments. "There isn't much room for subtlety in color and design," as an industry representative puts it. "All we want, really, is enough flash so the game can attract its share of attention."[7] The goal of the industry, not to fall behind the myths inspired by Hollywood, obviously collides with its economic, but certainly with its technical possibilities. The laughter over it, of course, coincides with the laughter of the giant culture industries, which have monopolized the power of affective bedazzlement. Add to that the fact that the makeup of all older pinball machine models lags behind commodity fashion trends by a couple of generations: the particular economic form of the pinball display, which doesn't sell products as much as rent the machines to players for as long as possible, thus allows for the entry of a rudimentary form of historical consciousness. The potential burst of laughter elicited upon "looking at the cheap cliché that still portrays technology and delusion in naïve and brutal form,"[8] may be evidence of a latent skepticism vis-à-vis today's machine-made commodity aesthetic, which only dares to venture out at the sight of something evidently old-fashioned. In such a spontaneous form, however, it also has the effect of advocating the modern, and technically more perfect, arrangement.

None of this means that the aesthetic of the pinball machine has compromised its stature in the eyes of its players. Not only are there snobs or fans of so-called "trivial myths," that have already elevated the backglass or even entire machines to the status of collector's items. What suggests itself as well is an emotional affect, which the machines could capitalize on:

To wit, it is possible that the colorful as much as clumsy decorations hearken back to the cheap toys and the rather crude distractions of the fairs of old, which conjured up the most delightful dreams in the minds of children. It is not for nothing that the pinball machine makeup capitalizes on the motifs of the circus, the clown, and vaudeville. What falls into the fairs' field of associations, in which dubious figures peddled their altogether paltry but playful wares, is the subtle advertising of written warnings. Those warnings associate pinball machines with asociality and even prostitution, and hence give a name and place to the vague promises which the city, and especially a big city, make to youths. These youths roam about in the city without parental guidance and support, only to, eventually—play pinball.

(Translated from the German by Michael Wutz.)

1 Tom Buckley, "Mother is a Pinball Machine," *Esquire*, August 1966, 134.
2 The very fact that brain-teasers and related machines exist, but have to date been unable to break into the market, indicates the limits, not of game-machine technology, but rather of its capitalist uses.
3 *Der Münzautomat*, Mainz, 1969, 71.
4 The pinball makeup plays, hence, a pivotal role in the advertisements of sellers. They foreground the "alluring exterior design" and "the attractive play field" of newer models, and insist that "the [machines'] visual design, including their illuminated point counters, by themselves are exerting a strong attraction on the players" (*Der Automaten-Markt*, Braunschweig, 1968, 48).
5 See, D. Hainz, "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp," in *Zeit-Megazin*, vol. 25, no. 12 (1970): 21. Hainz also elaborates on the aesthetic of the pinball machine, more generally.
6 See the photographic addendum in Hainz, "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp".
7 Tom Buckley, "Mother is a Pinball Machine," 135.
8 Hainz, "Päng. Crack. Klumm. Zoff. Flopp. Blip. Kläng. Zachapp," 21.

Paolo Virno
—In the Age of Pinball

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Let me give you a kind of poetic or literary definition of what occurred in Italy in the early 1980s. In those years, because of the contamination of the previous forms of urban conviviality, pinball machines began to disappear. It happened in a flash. The "token-operated, electromechanical games"—as one dictionary with no sense of the value of myth defines them—quit without warning the bars that had been their natural habitat and were forcibly deported to video games arcades. A grotesque fate, bleaker, even, than if they had simply ceased to exist. I mean, it's as if the fireflies of our fathers' and grandfathers' "best youth" (a youth that was sometimes marred by hunger and pellagra, but not, thank God, by Americanisms) had survived only in zoos, in glass cases: they, the faint guiding lights of the rustic spirit. Pinball machines, formerly ubiquitous, denizens of every nook and cranny, are now confined to special reserves as hostages of the new, electronic games. Like Jugurtha dragged in chains behind the chariot of his haughty Roman conqueror, they suffer the humiliation of still, in spite of everything, being alive. Behold the pinball machine in captivity, sunk and unsalvageable, encircled by more sophisticated contraptions, ostentatiously preserved in its obsolescence, a metallic example of the Hegelian dialectic.

In a mere couple of years—between 1979 and 1981, say—pinball machines vanished. For a while, the spaces in bars reserved for them remained empty, the saddest of shoes without feet, victims' outlines traced in chalk. Then they found other things to put there. Pinball machines are now just a memory, rather an agonising one, from the past: no grown man who remembers them recognises his youthful self in Johnny-come-lately video games and he is thus deprived of the images that could give substance to his regrets. The caesura couldn't be cleaner or more excruciating. The two phases of the capitalist system in Italy are quite distinct, incommensurable even. The first runs from the end of the war up to the demise of pinball machines, the second is ushered in by the extermination of those instruments of human caprice.

Before we turn to the "great transformation," which caught us unawares and defenceless, we should remember that pinball machines weren't alone; they had mechanical twins, fated, just like them, to tumble from glory into calamity. Jukeboxes. There was one in every bar, motel and snack bar, they were unforgettable fixtures in the public micro-space; and now they too lodge in private houses or other frigid mausoleums. The sudden change took out at a stroke the three 45s and the five shiny balls you pinged with the two spring-loaded flippers: both the soundtrack and the ludic plot. And with jukeboxes and pinball went memories, practices and customs. Solid social presences were turned to dust. Projects and values that had nourished more than one generation dried up.

Pinball was an integral part of the factory-city: of Fiatville and Pirellitown. In a way that was inconceivable outside of workplaces organised by Fordist and Taylorist principles, it seemed blithely to prolong the man/machine relationship. The player depends on something mechanical, but it's an *active* submission, there's constant interaction, total involvement. It boils down to a one-to-one. With pinball as with assembly lines, there has to be human intervention: the machine throws in a few words, but it's up to the player/worker to spell out the complete sentence. Without an additional, transformative action, the car body glides off, useless, and the flipped ball scores no points. In both cases, the mechanical automaton must be kept awake from the outside, enlivened by a yeast-like "agency." The steel ball is launched anew each time, "worked" by frenetic hands, flipped where it's most likely to score, trapped in captive lanes for bonus points: a substitute for the assembly line, pinball exorcises and, at the same time, celebrates it. Like a day off in the working week.

The old testament was mechanical. Then came the electronic age: amen. The automation of the production process, like that of the games that proliferate on its margins, has now been accomplished. In a game of pinball, players fired the ball-missile many times, they were allowed multiple restarts, whereas now, in video games and the computerised factory alike, you usually have one, single "beginning," an absolute *incipit* after which the game/work proceeds self-sufficiently, imperturbably. Or almost imperturbably: because, sooner or later, glitches, accidents and minor catastrophes are bound to occur. That's when the player/worker intervenes, in a role that combines maintenance with vigilant monitoring of the automatic process. No longer taking part directly, but standing to one side. Tweaking and correcting. *Indispensably marginal*, you might say. Caught in this acrid oxymoron, the new workers/players live in a paradoxical condition. In order to free themselves from their unique "marginality," the post-Fordist worker and the post-pinball player cannot count on their unique "indispensability": the two things, in fact, depend on each other. They stand and fall together. For the time being, we are faced with the objective results of the "great transformation": a new species is on the march, a tribe of hopeful monsters sending out indecipherable signals, which is lost just when it appeared to be saved, saved just when it was given up for dead.

Pinball is also a reminder of political activity outside factories in the years that the judges of the Courts of Assizes have often evoked with a biblically concise expression: "in the time of the events". One early autumn evening, a group of activists from the extra-parliamentary Left stood before the Fiat plant in Rivalta, having just arrived in Turin from other, less crucial cities. To stand before the giant Fiat was a daunting experience. Their shifts over, some workers dashed for the waiting buses. Others, however, headed for the bar opposite, the domain of the inevitable pinball machine. One of the

activists, overwhelmed by the burden of political action, was hogging the machine to himself, playing game after game. Two or three of the workers approached him out of curiosity at first, then threw down the gauntlet. The challenge was accepted and the contest that followed hung in the balance for hours, just like Paul Newman's pool game in *The Hustler*. The prize at stake was Vecchia Romagna brandy. The next day, before the Rivalta factory gates, the pinball-playing activist was the only one who had made any "contacts," and good ones at that since his opponents the previous evening had been works council delegates.

There's a vague but not arbitrary link, too, between pinball and shop floor guerrilla warfare. Think of the idiomatic expression "to go on tilt." It means the player, *violating the rules* in an attempt to stack up points illegitimately, has slammed the machine so hard that the circuit has broken. The penalty for tilting, or, rather, for unauthorised tampering, is to forfeit what's left of the game. And this is where we catch a glimpse of other battles, those waged on the production line: the cunning acts of sabotage whereby the worker tries to lighten the load and make a monkey out of the foreman, and which are penalised. But what satisfaction is to be had if you can deploy sufficient sleight of hand to fool the machine—even when it's being shoved and lifted—into letting you off by *not* going on tilt! Nothing beats getting away with offending and cheating. It's a truly happy ending. Crime has paid.

All of this is over now. The disappearance of pinball just heightens the nostalgia for a country we won't see again because it has become unrecognisable. There are some who complain: about bars that are nothing like bars, factories that look nothing like factories, sensible, sceptical teenagers. Pinball has vanished from the urban landscape, as has the Italian Communist Party: what is to be done? Still, there was a time when we, pinball wizards, were scoffed at by those who clung to the pre-existing "café culture," with its witty conversation, writers at the tables composing small moral works, etc. To them—and they, moreover, were fond of fireflies, pellagra and cops with working-class roots—we had only one thing to say: seek salvation there where the danger is greatest. Back then, when the culture was that of pinball and the Fordist factory, there was a slogan that went: *inside and against*. We had to start from there: from the solitary game that serves as a dowry to hasty consummation; from the player's somewhat louche, swaggering stance, like a cowboy reaching for his holster; from the lights and the rhythms of those machines, the *music of terrestrial spheres* broadcast by them.

Disparaged ourselves by the lovers of fireflies, is it our turn now, we, the pinball wizards, to sneer at the all-electronic generation out of resentful nostalgia? That would be outrageous. A catastrophe, nothing less than a crime against the hopeful monsters to be found playing video games and in robotised factories. No, let's not mourn pinball the way others mourned their fireflies. We'd be playing into the hands of those who, at scant risk, have not ceased to *command* in the world of fireflies, that of pinball and, now, in the video games funfair.

P.S. The beginning of this article is inspired by Pier Paolo Pasolini's famous piece on the disappearance of the fireflies (and the peasant world) published in *Corriere della Sera* in 1974. In it the Friulian poet expressed his horror at the "anthropological devastation" he believed consumer neocapitalism had wreaked on Italy. Pasolini's text remains a good example of how *not* to react to defeats and changes.

(Translated from the Italian by Simon Chapman and Denise Contini.)